MANISM
TS HOME

. EAGER, D. D.

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ROMANISM IN ITS HOME

BY
JOHN H. EAGER, D.D.

With Introduction by
JOHN A. BROADUS, D.D.

If the liberties of the American people are ever destroyed, they will fall by the hands of the Roman clergy.

—*La Fayette*

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To

THE FOREIGN MISSION BOARD

OF THE

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

AND TO

ALL WHO DESIRE THE ENLIGHTENMENT

AND THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF

ROMAN CATHOLICS

This Book is Dedicated

BY

The Author

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INTRODUCTION

THE author of this work is well known to me, as he studied four years in the theological seminary with which I am connected, and we repeatedly met before he went as a missionary to Italy, as well as when he came back on a visit.

The nature of the subject treated makes it proper to testify that he is a man of remarkable talents and thorough education, of sound judgment and high character. If any of his statements should appear surprising, or meet with contradiction, the reader may be well assured that they have been made after careful examination, and either from personal knowledge or from the very best authorities. The book seems to me, having read it throughout in manuscript, to be admirably free from all mere sensation and from all exaggeration, yet it is full of varied interest and valuable information. The style is so clear and pleasant that it may be read rapidly through without labor, or opened anywhere for pastime; and yet the careful student will find it a treasury of instruction upon a highly important subject, for the real nature and tendencies of the Roman Catholic system are of course most fully developed and most clearly seen in Italy. If this book shall be widely circulated and read, it will open the eyes of many to real and grave dangers here at home and to a soul-stirring need of missionary work in Italy.

JOHN A. BROADUS.

LOUISVILLE, KY., Feb. 7, 1894.

PREFACE

THE following pages do not pretend to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject in hand. The chief object has been to give facts, and let these speak for themselves. The original design included chapters on Romanism in France, Spain, Belgium, Austria, South America, Mexico, and Canada, prepared by qualified persons living in these respective countries, but it has seemed best to reserve this material for possible future use.

The subject is not a congenial one, and the author is well aware that his manner of treating it will expose him to the charges of uncharitableness and exaggeration.

One who is giving his life to Christian work among Romanists could justly smile at the charge of uncharitableness; and, as to exaggeration, let those bring this charge who have lived long in Roman Catholic countries, and have given special attention to the practical workings of Romanism. The author craves the judgment of all missionaries, native or foreign, who are laboring in strictly Roman Catholic countries, and for a few such opinions the reader is referred to Chapters XXIX. and XXX. and to the Addenda.

One may love Romanists to the extent of being willing to sacrifice his life for them, and at the same time hate Romanism with a "perfect hatred." The dark side of Romanism is dark indeed, and casts its dreary, deadening shadow athwart the brighter side.

Facts could be given from all parts of the world to prove that the errors of Romanism, some of which are peculiarly subtle and attractive, are still working immense mischief. A venerable missionary in China, Archdeacon Wolfe, after

speaking of the errors and "wily crafts" of Roman Catholic priests in that country (see "Church Missionary Intelligencer," May, 1892, p. 353), exclaims:

"I only wish our English people at home, who seem so eager to rush into the foul embrace of the papacy, could see the superstitious and idolatrous practices of the priests and their converts here, where no restraining influence is brought to bear upon them, and where they are not afraid of exposure by the light from Protestant truth. I make bold to say their eyes would be opened to the true nature of Romanism, and they would not be so ready, as so many seem to be at present, to embrace so unscriptural a system."

Romanism adapts itself to its environment, and is usually just as bad as the circumstances will allow. Romanism has a marvelous power to deceive and enslave man. The Inquisition is a thing of the past, but Jesuitism is still vigorous and buoyant, and very many will surely fall into the snares which are being laid with such consummate wisdom, for Rome ever aims to trim her sails to suit the breeze. In these days of doubt and skepticism, especially concerning the supreme authority of Scripture, the Church of Rome will probably reap a harvest, for while others are fighting the great battle she is quietly promising rest and peace to all who will drop anchor in the quiet harbor of her infallibility and supreme authority in religious matters.

Just here lies the *tap-root* of all Romish errors and intolerance. And yet to many minds this is the most attractive feature of the Roman Catholic Church. "The world is full of people" said Dr. Mariano, in his address on "Religious Thought in Italy," "who do not want the trouble of thinking for themselves; and more than all, there will always be many minds willing to accept a religion of traditions, of legalism, and of outward forms. For such minds the proclamation of the infallibility of the pope, outrageous as it may appear to us, has rather strengthened than otherwise the edifice

of the Roman Church, whilst the liberty of criticism in the Protestant world makes them afraid."

Amidst the conflict of contending opinions the Church of Rome does not hesitate to say: "Trust yourself to my guidance and keeping and all will be well. Come unto me, ye doubting, troubled ones, and I will soothe your fears and hush your doubts." Ah, let no one be deceived by the voice of this siren, whose words were never more soft and bewitching than to-day. No longer able to command, the Church of Rome is still abundantly able to deceive. Conscious of losing ground in those countries where she has so long held undisputed sway, she is anxiously and hopefully turning her attention in a very special manner to England and America, and is seeking by all the arts of which she is mistress to allure the unwary into her meshes. She aims at the highest, but she will not refuse the lowest proselyte who will surrender himself to her guidance.

Signor Varnier, an aged Italian minister, though in his youth a Roman Catholic priest, said, in a recent address: "Ordained a priest, and while yet in Rome finishing my theological and controversial studies, I was directed to learn the English language, with a view to working among English Protestants for their conversion to the Church of Rome. Animated by zeal for the conversion of Hindus and Mohammedans, but above all for the conversion of English Protestants to the Church of Rome, I left for India. Then I set to work earnestly and *bona fide*, having learned the languages of the land indispensable for the work, but my chiefest charge was for English work. At that time the many secessions from the Church of England to the Church of Rome, consequent on the Tractarian movement, had revived the long-cherished hopes of the papacy of re-conquering England to the Church of Rome; and every effort was being made by the Jesuits to favor that movement by setting at work all possible agencies and multiplying missions in Protestant England. Our Eng-

lish friends may not know that Rome attaches the highest importance to subduing and re-conquering England to the papacy. Rightly or wrongly, it is believed in Rome, that if Protestantism be crushed and stamped out in England it will die away in every other country. England is considered as the great bulwark of the Protestant faith, and the mainstay of all Protestant institutions, missionary societies, Bible societies, and other gospel agencies throughout all countries." Surely this note of warning is needed to-day, not only in England, where such frequent conversions to the Romish Church are chronicled, but equally in America, where Romanism is striving for the mastery as few perhaps imagine. Enlightened public opinion has compelled the Church of Rome to change her tone and her tactics; but her pretensions were never greater than at present. What pontiff ever laid claim to higher prerogatives than the one who sits in the Vatican to-day, and who is twice called in a late "Decree" of the Sacred Congregation in Rome, "*Our most holy Lord, Pope Leo XIII.*" ?

May the evils recounted in the following pages serve to put us on our guard against the ensnaring errors of Romanism, to stir our hearts with genuine practical sympathy for the many, both among priests and laity, who are so sadly deceived, and for the few who are so bravely seeking to undeceive them, and to warn us all against the danger and the sin of departing from the precepts of our one rule of faith, our sole supreme authority in all matters of religion, the word of God.

JOHN H. EAGER.

FLORENCE, ITALY.

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ROMANISM IN ITS HOME

CHAPTER I

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

SOON after coming to Italy I began to realize that I knew very little about Romanism. I had read and heard and seen enough to convince me that it was a corrupt and dangerous system, far removed from the primitive purity and simplicity of apostolic Christianity; but the half had not been told. Almost every day some new and startling fact came to my knowledge.

One of the first things that impressed me was the apparently heartless and perfunctory way in which religious duties were performed. In the churches, the people were so careless and indifferent that I was unable to persuade myself that most of them offered a true spiritual worship to God. On turning my attention to the priests, I found them even less earnest and sincere than the people. The service seemed a mere performance on their part, with little or no thought of the audience. To a novice, it appeared that the chief object of the priests was to hurry through the daily routine of work, and receive the recompense thereof.

The first time I attended a religious service in St. Peter's, the pope's church, and the great cathedral of the world, I was saddened beyond expression. Like many others, I had been drawn thither by the world-wide reputation of the pope's choir; but the charm of the wonderful singing was quite destroyed for me by the heart-sickening service which accompanied it. Other visits to St. Peter's have only deepened

my first impressions, causing me more than ever to appreciate the surprise, the chagrin, the horror, and the righteous indignation of Luther under somewhat similar circumstances. Little by little I began to understand the saying, "Never send a sincere Catholic to Rome."

To my great surprise, I found people bowing before images and actually praying to them, and to my horror I learned that Catholicism not only sanctions and encourages this practice, but strictly enjoins it upon the people, promising a special blessing to all who comply therewith.[1]

A visit to Naples and Southern Italy, in 1881, increased my surprise and sorrow, for there I found not only refined, respectable idolatry, but a low and gross form of it, worthy only of uncivilized pagans. I began to feel also that just in those places where the priests have most power over the people, there ignorance, superstition, and vice seem to abound in greatest measure. Having learned the Italian language, I often visited the churches to see the people at their religious worship, and to hear for myself what kind of instruction they received. Most of the sermons I heard were unsatisfactory, and often sophistical and misleading, many of them being mere chaff, or even deadly poison. In many cases the blind were leading the blind and both were falling into the ditch. The people were perishing for lack of knowledge, and yet those whose duty it was to instruct them seemed pleased to have it so.

After sixteen years' residence in Italy, these first impressions have become deeper and stronger. In the meantime, the conviction has been strengthening that as the writer was ignorant of many of the features and phases of Romanism so common in this land, others situated as he was may be in the same condition, and for the sake of such this book has been

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[1] See Ballarmino, "*De Relig. et Imagin. Sanct.*," Bk. II., Chap. 8, Sec. 7, to the end of Chap. 12; also Chap. 21, 22, 23.

Council of Trent, Session XXV., "*Decret. de invocat. vener.*," etc.

written. To some it may seem that Romanism is rather a hackneyed subject, and that one's strength and time might be much better employed than in writing upon it; but in addition to my own conviction of the timeliness and importance of the subject, I am glad to say that this work has not been undertaken without the advice and encouragement of a number of our wisest and best men in America, who assured me that such facts as I propose to relate are greatly needed, and will certainly accomplish good.

Surely it is right for people to know just what Romanism is at the fountain head; not what it was centuries ago, during the darkness of the Middle Ages, but what it is now in this day, with the light of nineteen hundred years shining down upon it. It still claims to be the one true church of Christ, called and sent forth for the enlightenment and salvation of the world. If it has failed in its high mission in those lands where it reigned supreme more than a thousand years and has degenerated into a mere "form of godliness without the power thereof," or even into a most deceptive and dangerous kind of paganism, this also should be known and seriously pondered. God forbid that the seeds of Romanism, which are being so diligently and widely sown in America at the present time, should ever come to maturity and produce the fearful harvest which is so abundant in this land! The plain facts concerning Romanism in Italy cannot be stated without seeming exaggeration and without the appearance of uncharitableness toward a large body of professing Christians.

While frankly acknowledging that he cannot but consider Romanism a great system of error, most misleading and destructive in its tendencies, the writer disclaims any ill-will toward Romanists as such, whose enlightenment and salvation he most earnestly desires. Oh, that they might be willing to try their system by the one standard which God has given us, the Holy Bible!

Some of the facts which follow will be as great a surprise to many who read these pages as they were to the writer. One day a young man who had recently come to Italy heard his uncle discoursing on the evils of Romanism. The language seemed severe and uncharitable, and he did not hesitate to tell his uncle so. "Ah, my boy," replied the old man, "you have not lived in Italy thirty years. Until then, do not call me severe and uncharitable."

Let us look the facts in the face. Let us seek to know just what Romanism has done and is doing for its subjects. Perhaps we shall find, after all, that it is like a great upas tree, poisoning all who repose under the shadow of its branches. If our hearts are stirred with an earnest desire to destroy the tree, root and branch, let us not forget those who have been so unfortunate as to find shelter in its deadening shade. Let us sympathize with them, let us pray for them, let us do all in our power to save them. The upas tree, whose tap-root has been nourished in Italian soil, is withering and must eventually die. Let us plant the Tree of Life in its stead, and invite the people to eat of its leaves and rest under its branches.

CHAPTER II

VISITING CATHOLIC CHURCHES

NO one who loves and appreciates the simple gospel, and hates formality, superstition, and error, can visit Catholic churches in Italy without having his soul deeply stirred within him. Everything is done to attract the eye and charm the senses. Many of the churches are splendid monuments of art, built for beauty, and not for utility. No expense has been spared, and the genius of the artist has been exhausted in the attempt to please. A casual glance on entering one of these churches reveals splendid windows, often most exquisite in construction and appearance, beautiful paintings, handsome statuary, richly and often gaudily adorned altars, hundreds and even thousands of lamps and candles, votive offerings almost without number glistening on the walls, images and crosses everywhere, bright-colored hangings and flashy tinsel meeting the eye at every turn.

The services in all are very much the same ; preaching is seldom heard, and even these occasional sermons contain very little that can feed the souls of the people. Forms and ceremonies constitute the bulk of religion. Listening to mass in an unknown language, counting beads and repeating prayers before an image, now and then taking the consecrated wafer from the hands of the priest, kneeling before altars, making the sign of the cross, anointing with holy water and holy oil, confessing one's sins to the priest or doing penance for the same—this is what one sees and hears, and this is what the people call religion.

All this made a strange and sad impression upon me when I first came to Italy in 1880. I could not realize that I was

in a church, and that the people were really engaged in religious worship. The constant coming and going, the general inattention, the perfunctory way in which the people seemed to perform their duties, the genuflections and mumblings of the priests—everything seemed to strike me as incompatible with genuine, spiritual worship. I supposed that this impression might be largely due to the fact that I did not know the language, and that I was a stranger to the customs and feelings of the people ; but a long residence and much contact with the people have not greatly modified my feelings.

One day I stepped into a large and handsome church in Rome. The dim religious light that managed to work its way through the windows of the deeply stained glass was so very scant that at first it was almost impossible to see who were present and what was going on. In spite of the semi-darkness that pervaded the great building, some at least among the worshipers present had not succeeded in shutting out the world and in concentrating their thoughts on religion. Near the center of the room I noticed two women, one kneeling and the other sitting by her side. They were engaged in a lively conversation, each stopping now and then to repeat a prayer. A man was bowing before a large statue of some saint, and when I drew near he turned to see who it was, his lips moving all the while ; and when his prayers were ended he rose, kissed the foot of the image, already much worn by human lips, and went his way. At the door I found an old woman filling a cologne bottle with holy water. To hear what she would say, and with the hope of giving her some word of instruction and consolation, I stepped to her side and said courteously :

"Excuse me, but will you kindly tell me why you are filling that bottle with this water?"

"This is holy water," she responded, looking at me in the meantime rather curiously, doubtless wondering at my ignorance.

"Holy water!" I exclaimed in a tone of surprise, "and pray, what makes it holy?"

"Our Lord was baptized in it, and it is blessed," she replied.

Just what she meant by saying that the Lord was baptized in it I have never known. But many of these people have such strange ideas and get things so mixed and transposed that one must learn to be surprised at nothing. "And what are you going to do with the holy water?" I ventured to ask.

"I am going to take it to my house and——" She finished the sentence by making the sign of the cross with the water, which many believe is a means of warding off evil.

"What do you mean by that sign? What good will this do you?" I asked, pretending to know nothing about the matter.

"It will bless my house, and keep disease and evil from us," she responded.

Going near the font and looking into it, I discovered that the water was very dirty and nearly exhausted. As it was too shallow to run into the bottle, she was patiently dipping it up with her hand, letting it run in drop by drop. As I stood watching her, my heart ached and I felt a deep sympathy for her, and wished to say to her there and then: "Poor, patient, suffering old woman, why do you not look to Jesus, who alone can bless and save, instead of trusting in this heathen superstition?" But to her this was religion, for she had never heard anything better, and very likely she pitied me greatly for my ignorance and unbelief, and went away with the idea that I had no religion at all. The more ignorant one is the more likely he is to feel that he alone is right, and that others are wrong just in proportion as they differ from him.

On entering another church in Rome I found three images, all of which were supposed to possess miraculous powers. Seeing a very ugly, repulsive-looking head, crowned

with thorns, and blood trickling down on the face, and the features all distorted and disfigured, I asked the old sexton what it meant, and he informed me that it was an ancient head of Christ. "Do people come here to pray to this head?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed," he replied.

"But why do they pray to it? Does it perform miracles?" I inquired.

"Why, certainly; do you not see the many votive offerings which have been brought by those who have received a blessing? Every church has an image that works miracles."

Another small church in the same quarter of Rome I found to be very pretty, but so dark that I could scarcely see to walk. It was literally crowded with altars, confessionals, images, tombs, lamps, candles, and other such things. Just to the right, on the altar, was an image of the infant Christ enclosed in a handsome glass case. On the opposite side sat a life-size image of the Virgin, the brass foot of which had been much worn away by the lips of the people. At the other end of the church, on each side of the altar, two images, one of Christ and the other of the Virgin, were standing, clothed in rich and flashy garments. In the farther corner was a great crucifix, at least double life-size. Some thirty or more pictures adorned the walls, and small crosses were abundant. The sacristan being in the room, I stepped to his side and said:

"Are there any relics in this church?"

"I do not know," he replied, "as I have been here only three days."

"I see that you are not an Italian?" I ventured to say.

"No; I am from Poland," he replied in his brogue.

At that moment a young priest came in, and from him I learned that the church had many relics, but that I could not see them then, as the "spiritual father" who had the

oversight of these things, and kept the key, was in the country, and would not return till the close of the summer. He offered to take my name and address and send me a list of the relics ; but preferring to remain *incognito*, I thanked him and passed on.

On entering one of the principal churches of Florence, the first thing that attracted my attention was a very realistic representation of the birth of the Saviour, the figures all being life-size. Joseph, clothed in rich garments, is standing over the infant Jesus, a rosary hanging on his left hand, and thirteen rings glistening on his right. Mary wears a dress of gold and silver, and a very handsome cloak. She has also a richly jeweled crown, two rings, ten bracelets, and a host of necklaces ; and besides all this, many votive offerings are lying at her feet. The infant Christ is reclining upon a bed of flowers, covered with silk, and is holding a rosary in his hand. By his side are two angels clothed in shining raiment, and John the Baptist as a babe. On each side of this group is a printed prayer to Mary, which the worshipers are expected to repeat when they come to bow before these images. One young man kneeled and repeated this prayer while I stood taking notes.

On the opposite side of the church was a most repulsive-looking figure of Christ, placed in a niche in the wall. The Saviour is represented in a sitting posture, entirely nude, with folded and chained hands, and a crown of thorns on his head, the thorns piercing his brow, the blood meanwhile trickling down in great profusion on his face and body. The head is turned a little to one side, the mouth is half open, and the features are fearfully distorted. At the foot of the image are many votive offerings, a tacit acknowledgment of blessings received by many who have worshiped at this ghastly shrine. Hundreds of intelligent people come and bow before this image to repeat their prayers. Can such things lead the people to an intelligent spiritual worship?

And yet this is found in one of the principal churches of Florence. Is it not really paganism in a Christian garb?

In a little chapel of the great Church of Jesus in Rome, founded by Loyola, I counted more than a thousand votive offerings, all hearts. Some were in beautiful frames, and others were set with gems. Before the altar I found these words:

> The High Priest, Pius IX., grants daily indulgence of three hundred days, which may also be applied to the dead, to every one who visits with a contrite heart this image of the most Holy Mary. September 28, 1860.

The small chapel was crowded with people, most of them evidently of the better class. One elegant-looking gentleman came in with his little girl of ten or twelve years of age, and after she had repeated a very brief prayer, he took her by the hand and led her to the image, that she might make the sign of the cross before it, and rub her fingers on the glass case containing it. I felt as if I were in some pagan temple. I was struck with the fact that the father seemed to take no part whatever in this performance, and naturally concluded that he belonged to that large class of Italians who think that these are things adapted to the needs and capacity of women and children, and hence they must not be disturbed in their faith. As for himself, of course he did not feel the need of such things, a very little religion being sufficient to satisfy his conscience and keep down his doubts concerning the future. Many other respectable-looking persons, especially women, followed the example of this little girl. While repeating their prayers they kept their eyes fixed constantly on the image, except when they turned around to glance at each new arrival.

This is perhaps the most gorgeous church in Rome, and on special festival occasions, when it is adorned with thousands of candles and lamps, with rich drapery and hangings in every direction, the organ every now and then sending

forth lively peals, while some seventy or more gaudily dressed priests are engaged in their performance, it would seem that nothing more was needed to attract the senses and to destroy genuine spirituality. Sad, indeed, is the condition of a church when pomp and ceremony and glare of light and tinsel are put in the place of true worship, or are even needed to draw the multitude. Such people are fed on husks, which cannot give nourishment and strength.

With the exception of two or three hours in the middle of the day, most Catholic churches in Italy are open from early morning to six or seven o'clock in the evening, so that people are free to choose their own time for their devotions. My visits to the churches were usually made after ten o'clock and often late in the afternoon.

One summer day in Rome, I entered a small church during the celebration of the early morning mass. I found fourteen persons present, all women except one, each busily engaged in going through the rosary. The priest at the altar, with his back turned to the people, was mumbling the service in such a lazy, indistinct manner that no one could possibly understand a word, while his stupid, sleepy-looking assistant occasionally made a very feeble response, the intervals of his time being spent in walking around and gazing aimlessly about, evidently anxious for the performance to end. After a few moments, three women came and bowed at the railing before the altar to receive the communion. The priest took the little case of freshly consecrated wafers from the altar, and with great care placed one in the mouth of each of the persons bowing before him, meanwhile holding a metal waiter under the mouth of each communicant, lest a particle of the holy bread fall to the floor, for the Church of Rome teaches that the smallest crumb of this wafer is a complete Christ, "body, soul, and divinity." After this, the priest returned to the altar, and while still standing muttering a few words, and then kneeling, repeated a very brief prayer or benediction,

not a syllable of which could I understand. The assistant was standing at his side holding a skull cap, which he placed on the priest's head as soon as the prayer was ended, and taking hold of the priest's trail, they marched out together and the door of the sacristy shut them from view. It might appear uncharitable were I to say that they put more heart and spirit into that last act of this morning service than into any previous part, and yet I must confess that it was the only portion that seemed to have any heart in it at all.

After the priest was gone most of the worshipers remained in their places, the performance of their duties not depending at all upon the presence of the priest. Almost perfect silence prevailed, broken only by a slight whispering sound, which came from one corner of the church. Turning in that direction I beheld a young woman kneeling before a confessional box, with her face pressed close against the steel grating which divided her from the priest, who sat within. I glanced several times toward that corner, but failed to discover the least trace of seriousness in that young woman's face or manner. On the contrary, she wore a very mischievous and suggestive smile, which made me suspect, it being well known that such things are very common in this country, that the conversation was far from religious, and that she was hearing and answering questions and listening to words which only the carnal man could have dictated or could take pleasure in. What a prostitution of an office which is called peculiarly sacred and inviolable! Who could witness it without righteous indignation and sadness of soul?

One day I found a man kneeling before an image of St. Joseph and repeating his prayers as rapidly as possible, now and then looking wistfully down at his rosary to see how much of his task yet remained unfinished. Occasionally he turned his eyes toward the spot where I was standing, and it was easy to see that for the moment, at least, he was in earnest, and that he was putting as much physical energy into

his worship as possible, for not only his lips, but his entire lower jaw was working vigorously and in such an odd manner as to excite a mingled feeling of laughter and pity. He had continued this exercise so long that he seemed almost exhausted, though this probably was a source of satisfaction to the poor man, this very exhaustion being to him an important part of his devotions.

By the side of the altar I found the following prayer to St. Joseph, whom Pius IX. raised to the dignity of universal protector of the church :

Most glorious patriarch St. Joseph, a voice much more authoritative than that which one day proceeded from the throne of Egypt, has lately said to the great Christian family that in their needs they should have recourse to you, *ite ad Joseph*. Behold, then, the great family which has been given to you to protect, behold us all at the foot of your celestial throne to implore your aid in the very grave evils by which we are at present tormented, like the brethren of the ancient Joseph, humbled and ashamed in view of our faults, which have called down upon our heads the wrath of heaven. But among us also there are many Benjamins, who suffer and weep without blame. However, most of all we mourn for our venerable father, the meek and pious Jacob, who complains that the last part of his life has been made bitter and unhappy. Take pity on his white locks, and grant that he may not close his eyes in the sleep of the just until he has seen an era of peace and salvation break forth upon his entire family. This, O great Saint, is the first favor which we ask of you since you have been proclaimed our universal protector. Can you have the heart to refuse us? Ah, we hope rather that the second Joseph will show himself even more merciful than the first, and in this confidence we repeat as with one voice: Oh, St. Joseph, pray for us! Jesus, Joseph, Mary, we give you our heart and soul!"

This prayer was composed with special reference to Pius IX., who is called "the meek and pious Jacob," and to all who repeat it one hundred days of indulgence are granted by special order of the pope. This indulgence can also be applied to souls in purgatory, *i. e.*, if I repeat the prayer in the name and for the sake of one already dead and in purgatory, it will lessen his stay there one hundred days. Alas for the

teachings of Romanism, by which millions have been deceived and kept out of the kingdom of heaven! The Saviour himself has said that "If the blind lead the blind, they both shall fall into the ditch." Sad and terrible truth, which ought to stir us to greater diligence in giving the blind the simple gospel of Christ.

One day in the month of August, 1891, I found myself in Modena, a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, which for a long time has been much under the influence of the Jesuits. Having a few hours at my disposal, I decided to visit the cathedral, a quaint old structure of the eleventh century. It was the hour of morning service, and about one hundred persons were present. According to the custom in all Catholic churches of this country, the doors were constantly swinging to and fro, or rather the great heavy leathern curtains, which take the place of doors in the daytime, were constantly rising and falling to let in new-comers and to let out those who had finished their morning devotions. A solemn stillness pervaded the entire building, broken only by the occasional mumbling of the priest who, dressed in rich and showy robes, stood with his back to the people, half-reading and half-singing, in a most formal and lifeless manner, the Latin service, which very few understood, and which probably the priest himself could not have explained any too well.

Most of the people seemed utterly indifferent to what the priest was doing. Not a few were quietly sleeping, and if they happened to be aroused, their lips began to move at once and very soon another bead would be slipped along, signifying that another prayer had been repeated, and the tired worshiper would draw a sigh of relief. These persons were evidently trying to do two things at once, say their prayers and get a morning nap. Some were sitting and gazing idly about, while a few seemed to have succeeded in concentrating their attention. Some were kneeling before the main altar where

the priest was officiating, while others with bowed heads were repeating prayers before the images of saints.

I noticed that one particular object attracted special attention and drew an unusual number of worshipers. I found it to be an old painting of Mary, which the priests claim is endowed with miraculous power to grant both temporal and spiritual blessings. It was enclosed in a large glass case, and surrounded by flowers and votive offerings of all kinds, brought by the people as an expression of gratitude for blessings received. I saw watches, ear-rings, bracelets, medals, gold chains, and other objects. Going a little nearer, my eyes fell upon a small framed image of the Virgin, with three prayers grouped around it, and this is what I read:

Prayers to the Most Holy Virgin, refuge of sinners, whose holy image is venerated in the Cathedral of Modena. Most loving Virgin, refuge of sinners, in the stormy sea of this world all look to you as a star which guides to port. You are the hope of all in trouble, the loving object of all hearts. Upon all, therefore, O Mary, turn your pitying eyes, gather and protect all under your mantle. No one, O blessed Virgin Mary, can hope for salvation except through your aid. It is a sign of salvation to have your name, O Mary, continually upon one's lips. Aid from Jesus, our most loving Saviour, comes through you; light to the blind, comfort to the weak, fervor to the lukewarm, consolation to the afflicted, and the great gift of final perseverance to all. O Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for us.

When I read these words and saw the people bowing humbly before this image, I thought of what a Catholic bishop said to a large audience—all Protestant, except six or eight—in a certain American town which I visited in 1888. He solemnly declared that the Catholic Church did not forbid the reading of the Bible, had never persecuted, and that there was no such thing in the church as image worship. Of course, any one who has lived in Italy, or who has read church history, knows that these statements, though solemnly uttered by a bishop, are contradicted by a mighty array of facts. In the cathedral of Modena I saw as genuine image

worship as could be found in India or China. During the few moments occupied in writing down the above prayer, thirty persons paid their devotions to this image.

One respectable-looking woman was accompanied by her little girl, some seven or eight years old. The woman kneeled and said a prayer, while the little girl stood before the image with folded hands and uplifted eyes. The prayer finished, the woman arose from her knees, came close to the image, made the sign of the cross twice, folded her hands, closed her eyes, and remained silent a moment. Then both came around where I was writing and kissed the small framed image around which the prayers were grouped.

A good many, instead of kissing the small image, rubbed their hand on the glass case enclosing the larger image, and then kissed their hand, afterward making the sign of the cross. One poor fellow, who seemed to have the ear-ache, dipped his finger in the holy (?) oil and applied it to his ear, making the sign of the cross and repeating an *Ave Maria*.

An old woman, who evidently had completed her four-score years, came hobbling along on her crutches, her whole frame trembling with age, and repeating aloud her prayer to the Virgin. Once before the image, she reached out her bony, trembling fingers and rubbed the glass case, which she evidently believed to be endowed with magic power. She then devoutly kissed her hand and made the sign of the cross. This done, she dropped two centimes (four mills) into the contribution box, and went her way.

My heart was touched, and I said to myself: "Poor woman! perhaps this is all she had, even all her living. And did she give it in vain? Or was she enabled by the Spirit of God to look through the darkness to the true light? What a life she has probably led, pinched by poverty, and blinded and harassed by the errors and superstitions of Romanism? Would that now, as she trembles on the verge of the grave, I might lead her to the true Refuge of sinners."

Just below this holy (!) image I found the following words, which explain why the poor deluded people worship it so devoutly. These are the words: "His Excellency, the Right Reverend My Lord, Bishop of Modena, D. Lewis Ferrari, grants forty days' indulgence every time these prayers are devoutly repeated."

"In vain they do worship me," said the Saviour, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Forty days' indulgence granted by the bishop of Modena! What blasphemy, and how misleading and blinding to the poor souls who have been taught to believe it!

I left this cathedral with mingled emotions stirring in my heart; sadness deep enough for tears, when I thought of the poor people who had been taught such things, and righteous indignation, when I called to mind the hypocrisy of many of the priests, and their unyielding opposition to the simple and saving truths of the gospel.

Stepping across the street from the cathedral, I entered another large church, where I found ten images with prayers to each, and indulgence offered for every prayer repeated, which indulgence could be applied to the living or the dead. Prayers were requested for the souls of those who had been dead many years. One of the ten images represented Christ with his heart all exposed, and below was a "Prayer to the Holy Heart of Jesus," which prayer pretended to be based on Scripture, where God said to Margaret, "Pray to me through the heart of my most loving Son, Jesus; through this heart I will hear thee, and thou wilt obtain whatever thou dost ask of me." Though no such passage exists in the Bible, doubtless thousands have lived and died believing that in repeating this prayer they were obeying a Scripture injunction. Below this prayer are the words, "Whoever repeats this prayer before this image will obtain one hundred days of indulgence, which may be applied to the living or the dead."

CHAPTER III

A RELIGION OF FEAR

ROMANISM, like paganism, is chiefly a religion of fear. With the majority of the people love forms a very small element in their religion. With many, religion is a pure form, little sentiment of any kind entering into it; but of the really sincere, those possessed of genuine religious instincts, who are anxiously seeking their eternal welfare, many of these seem to be moved almost entirely by fear. Purgatory is kept constantly before their vision, and they are exhorted to do many things in order to lessen their stay in its fearful flames.

Once, while visiting a Catholic family, I managed to give the conversation a serious, religious turn. Before leaving, one of the daughters, who had been brought somewhat under evangelical influence, requested me to talk with her aged mother, who was living in constant dread of the flames of purgatory. Poor woman! How cruel to keep her in such fearful bondage all the days of her life, never allowing her, even in her old age, to taste for one moment the exhilarating joy of those who can exclaim with Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

She knew nothing of the perfect love which casteth out fear. She listened attentively and gratefully to what I had to say, and then we kneeled together in prayer. Her tears and her hearty grasp of the hand as I was leaving the room attested the fact that she had been both pleased and touched. I trust she realized as never before that as sons of God we have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we may cry "Abba, Father."

A young man said to me one day, "The priests are always trying to frighten the people in order to get money from them." Some time ago a priest in Rome preached a sermon on purgatory. He made it appear that the most innocent person present could not possibly live a single day without committing sins enough to consign him to purgatory for at least one hundred years.

The audience was composed largely of ignorant, superstitious women, and unless they had already become hardened by such preaching, they must have been dismayed at the prospect, and could think of death and the hereafter with nothing but trembling anxiety. They are kept all their life in bondage through fear of death. They know nothing of Paul's joy which enabled him to say, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

The preacher said nothing of the blood and merits of Christ, but insisted much on confession, mass, prayers, and penance, including regular contributions to the church.

Even all of these combined have only a relative value, for nothing can avail to exempt one entirely from purgatory. The ignorant people of the Neapolitan province are told that Vesuvius is but an outlet of purgatory, and that the strange, unearthly noise made by the fire as it pours forth from the horrible crater is nothing else than the lamentations of the souls in purgatory. Standing on the edge of that crater one day, and listening with bated breath to that mighty heart-throb of mother earth which sent the liquid fire some two hundred feet into the air, this dreadful superstition was realistically brought to my mind, and I did not wonder that those who believe it are slaves of fear, and hence of the priests.

Once while visiting a famous monastery of Southern Italy, as I climbed the steep mountain I found the road lined with beggars. Several of them held in their hands small tin boxes

carefully locked, each having a little slit in the top. To extort money from the passers-by they shook these boxes almost constantly, singing out at the same time in the most sepulchral and heartrending tones possible: "Oh, give me an alms to liberate a soul from purgatory! Oh, for the love of God, give me an alms to liberate poor souls from purgatory!" This sad scene, with all that it implied, is indelibly stamped on my memory.

There is a village church near Rome where the priests have invented a new method of frightening the poor peasants. In the midst of the service, while the people are quietly engaged in their devotion, suddenly a horrible figure of the devil appears from a pit near the altar, threatening fire and brimstone and terrible vengeance upon all who neglect their church duties. One can imagine the effect this would produce upon these ignorant and deluded people. During the following week mothers doubtless recall that scene to their children to frighten them into obedience, thus gradually preparing them for that same unhappy life of religious fear and slavery.

Some years ago a government commission was sent to the island of Sicily to inquire into the condition of the mines. Entering one of the mines they found an image of the Virgin, which was devoutly worshiped by the people. This was nothing unusual, however, the same being done in every part of Italy. On passing to the other side of the mine, however, what was their surprise to find a horrible image of the devil, which also was being bowed down to and worshiped by the people!

"What does this mean?" they asked. And the miners quietly responded, "Oh, we think it safer to have friends on both sides." Romanism degenerated into devil worship! Then there is the fear many people have of the priests themselves. They may seriously injure one's temporal interests or social standing. They may deprive one of all the benefit

accruing from certain charitable institutions. They may refuse to perform a marriage ceremony, or to allow burial in consecrated ground. They may refuse absolution and extreme unction. In this way the people are often constrained to the perfunctory performance of many a duty, and religion becomes a mere mechanical system without life. The gospel means release; Romanism means bondage. The gospel leads the soul directly to God for pardon, peace, and joy, promising freedom from all the maxims and traditions and commandments of men; Romanism binds the fetters tighter, darkens the soul with human inventions, and lulls the conscience with false hopes. The gospel teaches the great law of love as the vital, energizing principle of the kingdom of heaven; Romanism rules by fear.

As in China and other pagan countries, so here, the people are constantly seeking to appease an angry god or saint. That highest of all privileges, a life of intimate and peaceful communion with our loving Heavenly Father through the infinite merits of Christ, and by the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is a truth and experience utterly unknown to the great mass of Italian Catholics. No one who really believes the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and endeavors to put them into practice, can possibly understand and realize in his daily life this blessed truth. Those in Italy who have entered into this joyful state, after having abandoned the Church of Rome with its enslaving and debasing errors and superstitions, do not cease to thank God for their escape from the darkness and bondage of Satan to the light and liberty of the gospel of Christ.

Many confess that as Catholics they knew nothing of the joy and liberty of sons, and that their fear and bondage were in exact proportion to their sincerity as Catholics, and to their fidelity and earnestness in endeavoring to obey the injunctions of the church. It is the same with all false religions: fear and not love is the ruling motive; bondage and not

freedom is the habitual state; anxious foreboding and not joyful anticipation is the unhappy experience.

Who does not pity those who are under the thraldom of such a religion? Who can refuse them sympathy and prayer, and whatever other help it may be in one's power to render!

CHAPTER IV

EFFECTS ON THE PEOPLE

A RELIGION must be judged by the effects it produces on the people at large, and especially on its most faithful adherents. If this be true, what must be our opinion of Romanism? Here in Italy it has reigned supreme for centuries, with every opportunity to do its best and with no one to throw obstacles in the way of its most complete development. Here it was planted, here it was diligently cultivated, here it reached its full maturity, and here it has brought forth its legitimate fruit. Just before the beginning of the Reformation, Romanism occupied the throne, not only of Italy, but also of Europe. Mosheim says: "As the sixteenth century opened, no danger seemed to threaten the Roman Pontiffs." "Everything was quiet," says another; "every heretic exterminated."

It was a time of great rejoicing among the papal authorities, and they congratulated themselves on their signal success in suppressing heresy and establishing the truth. During the Lateran Council it was officially and publicly proclaimed that all opposition to Rome had ceased. One of the speakers said, addressing Leo X.: "There is an end of resistance to papal rule, and religious opposers exist no more. The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its head, *i. e.*, to thee." To them it seemed that the millennium was about to dawn, and the council appointed a season of rejoicing. This state of things continued in Italy long after Romanism had received its death-blow in other lands, even down to our own day. Rome calls herself *The* Church, the *True* Church, the *Only* True Church.

At the close of her millennial reign,[1] with such power and opportunities as have never been possessed on earth, what a paradise Italy must be, what a model to all the world! We must draw the natural inference that her people are united, bound together by the strong bond of Christian fellowship; that education is universal, and the spirit of inquiry everywhere encouraged; that perfect liberty is enjoyed, and yet the law has little to do, for each has learned not only to repeat but to practise the Golden Rule; that the public standard of morality is so high that vice is almost unknown and ever seeks to hide from view its hideous form; that God's word is in every home and on every pulpit, is devoutly read and studied in private, and faithfully expounded and enforced in public; that Sunday is indeed the Lord's Day, the best and happiest of the seven; that industry and activity are universal; that peace and plenty abound, and the blessing of God rests upon the entire nation. So much at least one would reasonably expect, if the Church of Rome were as she then proudly claimed, the only true church of Christ.

But what are the facts? What was the real condition of Italy at the close of this long period, in the early part of this century.

The nation was rent by internal factions and oppressed by foreign foes. As an Italian said to me the other day, the unification of Italy, with Rome as her capital, is one of the great miracles of modern times. It was the work of many years, and the story of the struggle was written with the blood of brave patriots, and the more because the full force of the Church of Rome was aimed against it, her object being division and not unity.

General education was regarded with special disfavor, and that spirit of inquiry, so natural to the human mind, was

[1] See "*Ecce Venit*" (by A. J. Gordon, D. D.), Chap. V., for a most interesting discussion of Rome's "Mock Millennium," a book which, unfortunately, I did not see until the present work was completed.

sedulously repressed. About eighty per cent. of the entire population were unable to read or write. Even as late as 1881, after years of earnest effort on the part of the present progressive and aggressive government, the official statistics stood as follows: In Northern Italy forty per cent. were unable to read; in Central Italy sixty-four per cent.; in Southern Italy seventy-nine per cent.; in Sicily and Sardinia eighty-one per cent.; and in one province of Southern Italy, Cosenza, eighty-six per cent. One drawback to mission work is that the great mass of peasants are unable to read.

There were schools, but not for the people. Those schools that existed were under the strict surveillance of the church, who watched them with an ever-jealous eye. In the smaller towns and villages the parish priest was usually the school teacher and the catechism was the chief text-book. I once visited a town in the province of Rome, which had a population of ten thousand, and I learned that at least eight thousand of these were unable to read. We went up and down the streets offering the New Testament at five and ten cents a copy, but our sales were meagre, indeed, nearly every one greeting us with a shrug of the shoulders and the remark, "I do not know how to read." One man seemed rather indignant that he should be asked to buy a book, and replied: "I have no use for books; I have to work. Books are for gentlemen," *i. e.*, for men of leisure.

A Catholic bishop in America some years ago, in a public speech, claimed the Church of Rome had been the pioneer of liberty, even religious liberty. The liberty of Romanism is liberty to obey the infallible church. While Rome ruled in Italy, liberty was a heresy and a crime, and woe to the man who allowed himself freedom of thought and speech.

"You claim the liberty of teaching?" said Victor Hugo to the priests:

> Stop: be sincere; let us understand the liberty which you claim. It is the liberty of *not teaching*. You wish us to give you the people to

instruct. Very well. Let us see your pupils. Let us see those you have produced. What have you done for Italy? What have you done for Spain? For centuries you have kept in your hands, at your discretion, at your schools, these two great nations, illustrious among the illustrious. What have you done for them? I shall tell you. Thanks to you, Italy, whose name no man who thinks can any longer pronounce without inexpressible filial emotions; Italy, mother of genius and nations, which has spread abroad over the world all the most brilliant marvels of poetry and the arts; Italy, which has taught mankind to read, now knows not how to read. Yes, Italy is, of all the States of Europe, that one where the smallest number knows how to read. Italy has endowed the world, but what has it received from you? The Inquisition—the Inquisition, which certain men of the party try to-day to re-establish, which burned on the funeral pile millions of men; the Inquisition, which disinterred the dead to burn them as heretics, which declared the children of heretics infamous and incapable of any public honors, excepting only those who shall have denounced their fathers: the Inquisition, which, while I speak, still holds in the papal library the manuscripts of Galileo sealed under the papal signet. These are your masterpieces. The fire which we call Italy you have extinguished.

Smothered, but not extinguished, we say. Many are at work removing the rubbish, and though the task may be difficult and tedious, faith and hope expect that the fire will again be kindled and blaze forth as never before.

An Italian gentleman once said to me: "You must remember that until quite lately there was no such thing as liberty and justice in Italy. The priest was supreme, and justice meant simply the execution of his will. What could one expect but hypocrisy, intrigue, and crime? Even the brigandage of Italy, at one time so common, was nothing more nor less than the legitimate fruit of this unnatural and unbearable state of affairs."

That high moral tone which praises and demands virtue and abhors and condemns impurity and immorality, has long been conspicuous by its absence from Italy. By precept and practice Romanism in Italy has encouraged hypocrisy and vice, and fearfully weakened the moral fibre of the nation.

A short time ago a correspondent of one of the principal daily papers of Rome was deploring the sad moral condition of Italy. "Crime and bloodshed," he said, "are more common here than in any other country of Europe."

"And what does the Romish Church do for the social welfare and intellectual life of her people?" asks Dr. Alexander Maclaren, of Manchester, Eng., who visited Rome in 1865:

> Let the chronic poverty of Rome, where nothing flourishes but artists and priests, answer. Let the pestilential malaria of the Campagna, which yearly drives the monks in the outskirts from their monasteries, and strikes down the strong reapers from the mountains who dare to gather its harvests, answer. Let the one newspaper of Rome, with its two advertisements, answer. Let the ferocious brigands, with the pope's absolution in one pocket, and Ferdinand of Naples' commission in the other, answer. Let the Roman youth languishing untried for years in St. Angelo, because of rash words in a café, answer. Let the twenty thousand French bayonets answer. Let the Encyclical Letter answer, which, with the madness that the just Avenger sends on those whom he wills to destroy, proclaims the doom of the papacy, when it declares that Rome ought not, will not, cannot unite itself with the onward march of the people to social progress, to intellectual freedom, to political power. Be it so. "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*"

Is this what Romanism has done for Italy after a thousand years of safe and undisturbed possession? Has she fomented strife, favored ignorance and superstition, proscribed liberty, encouraged and practised vice, banished the pure word of God, minimized and all but abolished the Lord's Day in order to magnify and exalt saints' days, rejected the commandments of God in order to give place to her own traditions? Small wonder, then, that she has become a stench in the nostrils of many of her own people, and that thousands have turned away in disgust, declaring that if this be religion they prefer to have nothing to do with it.

In order to understand the true character of Romanism, one must know what it has done for the people in those

lands where it has met little opposition, and where heretics dared not teach the pure word of God, as for example, in Italy, Spain, Mexico, and South America. In these countries the condition of the great mass of the people has been sad enough, and even now they are more than a century behind some other nations, where Romanism has never been dominant. Here in Italy Romanism has too often inculcated just the opposite of what Christ taught and commanded, and, as a natural consequence, the people have become just the opposite of what Christ intended that they should be. Immorality is the rule and not the exception, even among the priests. Hypocrisy and pure formality are, alas, too common.

The liberty which results from a knowledge of the truth, so essential to true progress and development and to genuine peace of mind, is almost, if not quite, unknown, the really sincere ones, those who still have some spiritual instincts and aspirations left, being too frequently the victims of priestcraft, and of a system which fears nothing so much as that very freedom which the Saviour sets forth in the words: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," a freedom so precious and so essential that he gave his life in order that men might have it. Romanism teaches absolute and unquestioning obedience to the Church, and hence here in Italy freedom of thought too often means infidelity, Romanism and Christianity being taken as synonymous terms.

Because of these things the people in Italy are gradually drifting away from Romanism, and what they are to be in the future will largely depend upon the fidelity of those who have the truth. If after fifteen hundred years of domination Romanism were willing to step down and out and give us a chance for even one hundred years, by the grace of God we would revolutionize this whole land; the desert would blossom like the rose. Instead of the paradise lost

upon which Rome has been so successfully engaged during all these ages, we would prepare a paradise regained. Nor is this a mere dream, for the Lord himself, who came to destroy the works of the devil, has promised that error shall pine and perish on the earth, and that truth shall certainly prevail.

CHAPTER V

BAPTIZED PAGANISM

WHILE visiting America in 1888 it was my privilege to hear Rev. R. H. Graves, of Canton, China, speak on the religion of China. With a change of names he might have been telling us about Italy and Romanism. I discovered that every point he made finds its counterpart in Romanism as seen in Italy to-day, though of course somewhat modified by circumstances. When he had finished, I felt that my talk was scarcely necessary. I realized more than ever that Romanism in Italy is merely baptized paganism, having enough of truth to give it the form of Christianity and lull the conscience, but a sufficient mixture of error to delude and often destroy the soul.

Some good people who have never seen Romanism on its native heath, where, after many centuries of vigorous growth, it has come to full maturity, are loth to believe these things. Never having lived in a Romish country, and having little or no experience with the practical workings of Romanism, they are even disposed to charge those of us who say such things with narrow-mindedness and a want of true Christian charity. But surely that liberal-mindedness which looks with complacency on idolatry, and that charity which apologizes for error, cannot be beneficial to man or pleasing to God. This mingling of Christianity and paganism has been the glory and the shame of Romanism. By a very natural process the large element of good which existed in Roman Catholicism has been gradually diminished until it is all but eliminated, and the *modicum* of evil has become a mighty force, leavening the entire lump, and making itself the chief factor in the

religion of the people. The *modicum* of truth that Romanism still contains is the salt which preserves it from utter corruption and decay; but that salt has largely lost its savor, and is good for little else than to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Having lived in Italy since 1880, ten years of which were spent in Rome, and having traveled rather extensively throughout the country, I feel that it is not presumption to speak with freedom, and even with confidence, on this subject. Let us notice some points of striking similarity between the religion of China and the religion of Italy.

In China idols are often set up on the tops of mountains, in places difficult of access and calculated to call forth feelings of awe and reverence, and the people go on pilgrimages to visit them.

In Italy a similar custom prevails; churches, monasteries, shrines, or crosses are found on many a mountain or hill-top. When I first began to travel about in Italy, this feature of Romanism attracted my attention, and I often wondered why such inaccessible points were sought as sites for churches and shrines. I had been accustomed to see churches placed as conveniently as possible for the people, but here the object seemed to be to get as far away as possible. I found too, that instead of being an obstacle this inaccessibleness was rather an attraction to the people, the highest mountain often drawing the largest crowd. Later I learned that the higher the mountain and the more difficult of access it happened to be, the greater would be the reward for those who came to worship before the image or shrine at its summit. I thought of the words of Jeremiah: "Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills." Some of these "high hills" are visited yearly by many thousand people, including the aged and decrepit, some of whom are scarcely able to drag their weary limbs up the steep ascent. Some come to pay a vow,

some to be cured of a disease, some to secure a charm that will insure prosperity for the coming year, and open the door of paradise in case of death; some come for traffic and trade, and they are quick to let you know that this is their chief business; some come to expose their deformities and miseries, hoping thus to extort an alms from their more fortunate brethren; and many others come to have a jolly good time, and they have it.

On the tops of these mountains I have seen as genuine paganism as can be found in the darkest corner of China. The people are taught, and many of them believe, that here are images endowed with divine attributes, crosses that speak, relics that work wonderful miracles, dead saints whose bones contain some mysterious medicinal virtue, and other "lying vanities," to attract the ignorant and superstitious.

Those whose duty it is to teach the people the way of truth have said, like the false prophet of old, "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." But the Lord has declared: "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." His word is being fulfilled in Italy, for these high places of sin and deception are becoming better known and less revered by the people, and through the spread of knowledge and truth, and by virtue of the severe strictures of the present liberal government, they are gradually passing away.

In China an important part of worship is the burning of incense in the temples and before the idols. The same is true in Italy. Incense is burned every day, the priest waving it several times before the altar and then toward the assembled congregation.

In St. Peter's, the great Roman Catholic cathedral of the world, where more than a hundred priests, bishops, cardinals, and other dignitaries take part in the services every

Sunday, the incense is sometimes used *ad nauseam.* I have noticed that it is not only waved many times before the altar, but before each officiating priest, the process being punctiliously repeated three times. The careless and perfunctory way in which the ceremony is often performed, the smiling and suppressed giggling of the fat priests as they see some brother almost choked and blinded by the clouds of smoke which rise from the incense as it is waved under his very nose, the frequent pinches of snuff taken to destroy the unpleasant effect, and to keep the tired, uninterested worshiper, or rather actor, awake till his religious duties are performed—all this had a strange and saddening effect upon at least one observer. The entire service seemed mere acting; a simple religious farce; pure, unadulterated hypocrisy. This is what I saw and felt the first time I attended the service in St. Peter's, and in the midst of it all, somewhat amazed and deeply saddened, I kept saying to myself, "Is it possible that this is the great center, the fountain head of the Roman Catholic Church, which makes laws for many millions, which claims to be holy and infallible, and declares that only through her can salvation be procured?" Many of those men, not excluding him who waved the holy incense, needed no diviner of secrets to reveal the character of their daily life, for every beholder could read the story for himself. No wonder that Luther was scandalized when he came to Rome. No wonder that he returned to Germany with his heart full of righteous indignation, and his soul fired by a holy zeal and a fixed and courageous determination to expose the errors and corruption and base hypocrisy of Romanism.

In China religious worship is individual rather than congregational in character. The temples are open every day, and the people are constantly coming and going, not to receive religious instruction, or to unite in public, social worship, but each to perform some individual act or ceremony.

The custom in Italy is very similar. There are public

gatherings and discourses, but these are comparatively rare, and are by no means considered so important as some other things. Here too, the church door is swinging to and fro all day, each worshiper intent upon the performance of some duty which the church recommends and requires; confession to a priest, the repetition of certain prayers before a given altar or image, the hearing of mass, and other like duties. It is a very common experience in Italy, on entering a dimly lighted church, to find a few scattered worshipers, each going through his allotted task. Even when the priest is present, he usually has his back turned to the people, so that he and his congregation have very little to do with each other.

I seldom enter a Catholic church in Italy without feeling that religion has become, with many, a pure form, a mere lip-service, and that religious duties are a sort of penance. Instruction is rare and meagre, and very unsatisfactory, and seldom of a kind to give a shadow of real comfort to a hungry soul. Besides, the teaching is naturally erroneous and misleading, and the consequence is, that sad and fatal ignorance of gospel truth is almost universal.

Thousands can give no good reason for half the things they do, the only response one often gets being a significant shrug of the shoulders. They have always blindly followed the priests, most of whom anxiously and jealously discourage any tendency to doubt and inquisitiveness, this being considered a special and dangerous temptation of the devil. "Do what I say and ask no questions," is a favorite maxim of the priests. They have learned that questions are sometimes very embarrassing, and as the colored preacher said, "Spile de argyment." It is to their advantage to encourage this heathen feature of religion, which keeps the people in ignorance, makes them dependent on forms and ceremonies, and converts them into blind followers of the priests.

In China lights are kept burning constantly before idols. No one can visit Italy without being struck with this feature

of Romanism. Images abound everywhere—in the churches, in private houses, in shops and other places of business, in restaurants and hotels, on the street corners and by the roadside. Before most of these images lights are burning day and night. Whatever else is forgotten or neglected, this is something that must be remembered and looked after, else misfortune and disaster might be the result. Many superstitious people in Italy feel that to live in a house or to keep a shop without an image of the Virgin or some saint with a light constantly burning before it would be equal to opening the door to evil spirits and misfortunes of every kind.

The last house in which we lived in Rome was built in 1888, and a very important part of the great building is a large image of the Virgin, placed just inside the spacious entrance door, facing the stairway, and casting a look of compassion upon all who go in and out of that house. Before this image a gaslight is kept burning day and night throughout the entire year. This makes it necessary to keep the gas meter open constantly, and more than once the inmates of the large apartment house were no little disturbed, some mischievous boy having slyly opened a gas jet on the stairway. One day while I was remonstrating with the porter about it for the third or fourth time, he remarked, glancing at the image just above his head :

"But for that superstition we should have none of this trouble."

It is claimed that the light before one peculiarly sacred image in Rome has been burning continuously for several centuries, the oil never having been replenished during all that time. I was told that for generations the priests have diligently circulated the report that if any one should dare to extinguish this miraculous light, he would instantly be struck dead by lightning. But to prevent any such dreadful disaster, the room is guarded by a heavy door doubly locked and strongly barred.

In China it is the custom to deify certain men who have performed some great deed; statues are erected to their memory and they are worshiped by the people.

In Italy men are solemnly canonized by the pope, and thus placed in the catalogue of saints. The churches are full of the images of these saints, and prayers and supplications are offered to them daily.

The number of persons, both men and women, thus canonized is very great and, sad to say, some were anything other than saintly in their life and character. It is claimed that to be worthy of this great honor one must have lived a holy life, wrought several miracles, and died a martyr; but if the friends of a would-be saint are rich and liberal, it seems that the Catholic authorities in Rome will wink at many a defect, and accept as genuine many a false claim. It is usually a long, tedious, and expensive process, but if the candidate has a sufficient number of influential and wealthy friends success is certain.

It is no uncommon thing to find in Catholic churches the picture of some candidate for canonization, with an earnest appeal to the faithful to drop an alms into the contribution box just below. This picture may hang there for years, unless, perchance, the faithful are unusually liberal in their contributions.

CHAPTER VI

VAIN REPETITIONS AND LOCAL DEITIES

PEOPLE believe in China that they are heard for their much speaking, and that the desired blessing will be in proportion to the number of words used, or to the number of times a prayer is repeated. This same belief is strikingly illustrated in Italy every day and everywhere. The true idea of prayer seems to have disappeared almost entirely, and instead we find a vain repetition of words, a mere lip-service, the heart being often far away, occupied with other thoughts and feelings, the words of Isaiah being strictly fulfilled in their case. One need only to enter any Catholic church in Italy to be convinced of this fact.

To many a Protestant the sight is a strange one. Looking around upon the worshipers he observes that lips are moving rapidly, but that eyes are often wandering here and there. Many are supplied with a string of beads, each bead representing a prayer. Bowed before some altar or image, these beads are slowly counted and the required number of prayers repeated, the object being to get through as many as possible in the shortest possible time.

Some are hoping to quiet a troubled conscience. Others doubtless sincerely believe that this is the true and acceptable way to worship God, and rise from their knees with a feeling of satisfaction and relief when their round of prayers has been recited. On the twenty-fifth of March some of the most devout ones repeat an Ave Maria one thousand times, having been assured by the priest that such an act of devotion will certainly be the means of bringing down a great blessing from Mary. It is said of Joseph Labre, a poor beggar who

died in Rome about a hundred years ago, and has recently been canonized by Leo XIII., that he would sometimes repeat each of the prayers of the rosary fifteen hundred times. Almost the whole day was required for this herculean task. Under many an image, and before many an altar, the popes have caused to be placed inscriptions promising special blessings to those who will repeat many prayers before said images and altars.[1] The reward is usually so many days of indulgence, or the curtailing of one's stay in purgatory. Many poor deluded ones, dreading the flames of purgatory, and earnestly desiring to remain therein as brief a time as possible, patiently and often painfully repeat many prayers, blindly trusting in this false teaching of the church.

Poor souls ! they have never been told that the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin, and that nothing else can purify and save the soul.

The people have been gradually led back into the pagan idea and practice of using "vain repetitions." They have come to believe that they will be heard for their much speaking, and that they are daily acquiring special merit by the merely mechanical performance of this sacred duty, this highest of privileges. The great majority seem to be utter strangers to the idea that God is a loving Father, and that it is our sweet privilege to come to him as needy children and freely make known every want, assured that he will answer according to his wisdom and with a view to our highest good. Prayer is no longer the filial expression of the heart's deepest need, but a kind of penance to appease an angry God.

Several times after having prayed with some private family I have been struck with the remarks of certain Catholics present who had never before heard an informal, spontaneous prayer, coming from the heart, and suggested by the circumstances. An expression of genuine satisfaction, mingled however with surprise, was plainly written on the face, and not

[1] See Addenda, p. 277.

unfrequently I have seen tears glistening in the eyes. In spite of false teaching and practice they can but feel the power of true prayer, and some at least are quick to recognize the inferiority of their own unsatisfactory method of prayer.

In China there are many local deities, whose influence is limited to some particular place or profession. In their own special province, however, they are supposed to have great power, and are worshiped and adored by the people.

It may seem strange to some, and perhaps incredible to others, to be told that we have something very much like this in Italy, so nearly the same that it might almost have been borrowed from China, the author of one being the author of the other evil. Here each city has a patron saint, who has a special jurisdiction over that place. Altars, shrines, and statues are erected to his memory, and in nearly every house, and at many street corners, images or pictures of him are to be found. Before these the people offer their prayers and supplications, confidently expecting that they will be heard and rewarded. Often the people look to this saint far more than to God. Many believe that the destiny of their city is in his hands. Over other places he claims no authority, but in his own province he reigns supreme, and often is the real God of the people.

Saint Januarius, the patron saint of Naples, is practically the god of that great city, with its six hundred thousand inhabitants. Everywhere he is honored and worshiped as the presiding divinity of the place. The cathedral of Naples is dedicated to him. This cathedral contains a wonderful little chapel, which cost over a million dollars, and this also is dedicated to the "Divine Januarius." It was erected in consequence of a vow made to St. Januarius during the plague of 1527, it being understood that if he would stop the plague the people would build the chapel. Many wonderful things are related concerning this saint.

Three of the great annual festivals of Naples honor the

occasion of the so-called liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, which blood the priests profess to have in a small vial. This miraculous liquefaction takes place three times a year, that the people may have an undeniable demonstration of the fact that their patron saint is still alive and zealously guarding the interests of the city. If this so-called miracle fails to take place at the appointed time, many of the people become nervous and anxious, fearing that something has happened to displease St. Januarius, and that he may thus refuse to hear their prayers and avert the evils that are liable to befall them at any time. What power this gives the priests, and how they abuse it! I was present once just after the blood had liquefied, and as I looked upon the great multitude of people crowding the cathedral, and saw how eagerly they pushed their way to the altar to kiss the bottle which held the sacred blood, I could easily imagine myself in a pagan city, and present at some great heathen festival. I felt how dangerous it would be to interfere with that ceremony, and I realized more than ever the position that St. Januarius occupies in the sight of the people.

Years ago, when the French entered Naples and took possession of the city, the archbishop announced to the people that St. Januarius was greatly displeased at the presence of these foreign invaders in the city, for the blood would not liquefy at the appointed time. Hearing of this, and knowing how disastrous it might prove to his cause, the French general quietly sent a messenger to the archbishop to say to him that if the blood were not liquefied within twenty-four hours he would burn the cathedral to the ground. It is needless to say that the miracle (?) was soon performed and announced to the people, who little suspected the real cause.

Every profession has its patron saint, and there are also saints for the various diseases. I once asked a carriage driver, who was the happy possessor of several horses, if he ever prayed, and he at once replied, "Why, of course I do.

I never think of going to bed without asking St. Antonio to take care of my horses." And the poor man seemed to be perfectly sincere in his belief that only St. Antonio could do it. If one has toothache, he looks to St. Apollonia, and if he is threatened with some special eye trouble, he turns in his distress to St. Lucia.

The church is constantly adding to the already long list of saints, and the result can only be to darken and confuse the minds of the people and draw their hearts away from the one true source of blessing, comfort, and peace.

CHAPTER VII

PAGANISM IN ROME

ONE need not go to China or Africa to find paganism, for the genuine article abounds in Rome as well. Surely no unprejudiced person can visit the church of San Agostino without being impressed with this fact. Here one will find blind faith and superstition worthy of the Dark Ages. The center of attraction is a famous image of the Virgin, endowed, as it is claimed, with miraculous powers. This image is visited by persons of all ranks and conditions, and on special days there is one constant stream of devotees pouring in and out from morning to night, all intent on kissing the sacred foot and anointing themselves with the holy oil. A book of three hundred and ninety-eight pages was published in 1886 to call attention to this wonderful image, giving an account of its origin and history and of the miraculous cures wrought upon those who adore it. In this book six hundred and fifty miracles are related in detail, all said to be "historical and indubitable." The author claims that he has given only a small part of the innumerable miracles wrought by this image, whose glory is so great that many, on visiting it for the first time, amazed beyond measure, could but exclaim with the queen of Sheba : "Behold the half was not told me !"

One morning, wishing to see for myself, I entered the famous church of San Agostino. It was an ordinary day and there was no special service to attract the people. I found about one hundred persons present, but others constantly coming and going. At the farther end of the church, before the high altar, a priest stood mumbling the service in

an unknown language, while to my left a group of about twenty persons were kneeling before this image of the Virgin. I sat down to observe and take notes.

After prayer each one stepped up and kissed the foot of the image, pressing the forehead on the same, and making the sign of the cross. Some repeated the operation several times, rubbing also the sides of the face and the ears on the foot. One old woman, after thrice kissing the foot devoutly, pressed her forehead to it three times, laid her hand upon it and held it there a moment, dropped her little contribution into the box which stood suggestively near, and stepping aside, dipped her finger into the holy (?) oil and rubbed it all over one of her hands. I learned afterward that she had some ache in that hand, and was hoping in this way to get rid of it. A man after kissing the foot several times, dipped his fingers into the oil, and then touched the top of his head, his throat, the back of his neck, and finally drew his fingers entirely around his neck.

Two small schoolboys, satchel in hand, presented themselves. The taller one managed, by standing on tiptoe and stretching his neck as far as possible, to reach the foot and imprint a kiss upon it. The smaller boy made a faithful effort, but after all his straining and stretching, his lips remained about six inches below the foot. As he turned to his friend it was interesting and amusing to notice the expression on his face, which seemed to be a commingling of wonder, mischief, and perplexity. After another faithful trial he gave it up and joined his little companion.

One old woman, after kneeling some time in prayer, rose, and, approaching the image, laid her hand on the foot and held it there, others waiting behind for their turn. She seemed almost unconscious of their presence and was certainly in no hurry. Taking her hand away she kissed the foot, and pressed her right eye upon it, keeping it there for a moment. She kissed it again, and pressed her left eye

upon it, and still again, pressing her forehead upon it. The fourth time she kissed it, holding her lips a long time on the foot. Stepping to a little lamp near by, she dipped her finger in the oil, and touched her eyes and forehead, and turning again to the image, made the sign of the cross, courtesied, and stood for a moment with folded hands and uplifted face. She seemed loth to leave, and coming nearer courtesied again, and passing the image she bent her knee again in adoration. On her way to the door she bowed and kissed an old picture of the image, and dipping her finger in the holy water she made the sign of the cross, and bowed again, and just before leaving the door she turned and faced the high altar at the other end of the church, where the consecrated host is kept, and made the sign of the cross, and bowed again. Poor woman! apparently sincere and devout, but fearfully deluded.

Near the close of the services, when most of the people had left the church, I entered into conversation with the sacristan. "Have you any printed history of this image?" I ventured to ask.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "we have a nice book, telling all about the church, the maker of the image, and a few of her miracles. To tell about them all would be quite impossible, for it would require volumes and volumes."

I bought the book, and as I handed him the money, he said that I might add something for the Madonna, but I begged to be excused. "You seem to have very many votive offerings in the church."

"Yes, we have many thousands, so that there is no longer any room for them on the walls of the church, and each votive offering represents a miracle."

"Does the image really work miracles?"

"Why, certainly, they are constantly taking place. People come with headache, earache, sore eyes, and other diseases, and by touching the diseased part to the foot of the

image, and anointing it with the holy oil, they are cured." That explained what I had seen.

"Well, I must tell you frankly that I believe in the Lord, but I cannot believe in images."

"Ah, but you must believe if you want to be saved. Why, do you know that a man came here intending to kiss the image, but though he tried several times he found it impossible to touch his lips to the foot. Can you tell why? He had not been to confession for a long time, and after having confessed he found no trouble in kissing the foot. He told me afterward that it seemed to him that every time he tried to kiss the image invisible hands held him back. A few years ago, when the church was being repaired, a man fell from the roof (one hundred and thirty feet) headforemost on the marble floor, and was not seriously hurt. The image saved him. See, here is the picture."

"Did you see the man when he fell on his head?"

"Oh, I was right where we stand now, and he fell just where the woman with a red dress is kneeling."

"But I want to know if you really saw him when he came down on his head from that high point?"

"I tell you I was standing right here."

Though I repeated the question, I could not get him to say that he saw the man when he struck the marble floor on his head. I again assured him that I could not believe in images or in their power to work miracles, though I believed in the Lord and loved him, and had been blessed by him, and expected to spend eternity with him.

"Oh, but you cannot be saved unless you believe in the pope, the Holy Mother Church, the Madonna, and other doctrines of the Church. You must believe it all." All or none is the doctrine taught by the Church of Rome, and as no sensible man can believe all the rubbish taught in this country, thousands have made shipwreck of all religious faith.

By this time everybody had left the church except a poor,

miserable-looking woman, with three ragged, dirty children clinging to her skirts, all of whom were bowing before the image. The sexton was rattling the keys and seemed anxious to close the door, and, as the mother did not stir, the sacristan stepped up to them and said, "Come, come, get up and be off; it is time to close the door," and he hustled them away in a most unceremonious manner. I retired also. Later I returned to examine the church more carefully. I began to count the votive offerings, but soon grew tired, for there are not less than ten thousand of them, each one, be it remembered, claiming to represent a miracle. Before the several altars, lamps were burning and devotees were bowing. Each altar contains one or more images, and prayers addressed to them. Holy oil, holy water, and holy relics are not lacking.

I found many pictures representing miracles of almost every description wrought by the image. A woman falls into a well, and is drawn out before she is drowned, and the priest persuades her that it was a miracle, and out of gratitude she has the scene painted and hung up in the church. Another is run over by a carriage, but the Madonna is near to lighten the weight and prevent serious injury. Another falls from a great height, but through the intervention of the Madonna escapes unhurt. One picture represents a poor woman sitting up in bed, a stream of blood pouring from her mouth, but a bright ray of light from the face of the Madonna instantly stops the flow and heals the sick one.

In the month of April, 1886, a man living in Constantinople, who had long suffered from some serious internal malady, after earnest prayer to this image found that he was entirely well, in grateful remembrance of which he sent a golden head to Rome to adorn the image. In March, 1886, an English woman was declared dangerously and perhaps hopelessly ill by her physicians. A piece of cotton dipped in the holy oil, which stands near this image, was

sent her through the post, and as soon as it was put into her hands she swallowed both cotton and oil and was immediately cured.

In 1853 a woman living about twenty miles from Rome, having suffered some time from a sharp pain in her arm, and finding nothing to relieve her, anointed her arm with this same holy oil, making a vow to walk to Rome barefoot in order to pray before this image, and in a few days she was entirely cured. Another was instantly cured of a cancer by anointing with the oil.

On the fifth of January, 1827, Carolina Cinotti, being knocked down by a cart just in front of the church of San Agostino, was trampled under foot by the horse. Those who stood near cried to the image to save her, and she was saved, for though the wheel passed over her neck she received only a slight bruise, which soon entirely disappeared.

The above are specimens of the six hundred and fifty "historical and indubitable" miracles recorded in the book heretofore mentioned. This image is about twice life-size, and occupies a very prominent place at one end of the church. It is literally covered with rich and costly jewels, and many lamps and candles are always burning before it. Among these jewels is a beautiful golden cross, set with eleven large diamonds, a magnificent diadem covered with diamonds, a beautiful gold chain "presented to the queen of the universe by Maria Christina, Queen of Spain," and others of like value. A heavy crown of pure gold adorns the head. This crown was placed there in 1851 by the pope himself, with great pomp and ceremony, a description of which occupies fifteen pages of the aforementioned book.

In a prayer given to be recited before this image, Mary is represented as sitting upon a high and lofty seat, from which her glory radiates and beautifies paradise. She is called the authoress of merit and of hope, the refuge of sin-

ners, and the comforter of the afflicted, the repository and dispenser of Christ's grace.

This image is perhaps at present the most popular one in Rome, and is visited by hundreds of people every day in the year, and on special festival occasions by thousands. I left the church with a sad heart, saying to myself, "Surely this is idolatry, most displeasing to God and ruinous to the soul."

CHAPTER VIII

RELICS AND RELIC WORSHIP

THE Catholic churches of Italy claim to have a very rich store of relics. Many of these are guarded with jealous care, hid away under heavy lock and key, being brought forth only on special occasions. In this also Romanism resembles paganism.

These relics are greatly revered, and often actually worshiped by the people. There is a church in Rome which professes to have the chain with which the Apostle Peter was bound. Nothing in the church is more carefully preserved, or more highly prized. Near where it is stored away stands a contribution box with these words written on it: "Alms for the worship of the venerable chains." (*Elemosine per il culto delle venerabili catene.*)

On visiting this church one day I persuaded the sacristan to let me see the chain. It is kept in a sort of crypt a few feet below the floor, behind an altar. As the sacristan was preparing to light the altar candles, I remarked that it was not necessary, as I could see very well without them. "Ah, but these are very precious relics, and they cannot be shown without first lighting the candles!" I thought of the words on the contribution box.

After lighting the candles, he unlocked two beautiful bronze doors of the fifteenth century, one containing a representation of Peter carried to prison, and the other of Peter delivered by an angel. After opening the doors, and having made the sign of the cross, he turned and looked at me with an expression which seemed to say: "Why do you not give some sign of reverence?" Could he have looked into my

heart he would have found real sadness there, and a feeling of pity for him and all others similarly deluded.

The chain is about two yards long, and the rings are large and rusty looking.

"How did the church get this chain?" I asked.

"It was found in Jerusalem and presented by the Empress Eudoxia to Leo I. He had in his possession another chain, the one with which Peter had been bound in Rome by Nero, and when he brought these two chains near to each other immediately they leaped together and were at once perfectly and miraculously united. You can look and see for yourself how wonderfully the two pieces are joined."

I cast a look of pity upon the poor man. Is he really deluded? Does he honestly believe what he says? Or has he simply become a tool of the priests to delude others for gain?

Seeing me take out my note-book, he looked at me curiously, and remarked: "I suppose you are an Italian. Are you preparing a new guide-book?"

I made an evasive reply, gave him half a franc, and allowed him to go on about his business. I then sought the sexton, whom I hoped to find less embarrassingly inquisitive and more communicative. I found him at the other end of the church sweeping the floor. When I reached his side and spoke to him, he immediately stopped his work, and I saw at once that he was ready for a conversation. After listening to an explanation of a great painting on the ceiling, representing some miracle wrought by the "venerable chains," I asked, "And do you have any of these miracles now?"

"Yes, indeed," he replied, and in a tone of seriousness and apparent sincerity he added, "Ah, those chains have done wonders!"

"Are the chains carried to the house of the sick as in the case of the Most Holy Child?"

"No, these chains never leave the church, but the sick come here."

"Has anybody visited them lately to be healed?"

"Why, they come nearly every day. Just a year ago a child, whose mother lives in the same house with me, was brought here to be healed. The poor child could not walk a step, and was compelled to drag herself about in a sitting posture. Her father was an unbeliever, and was not willing for his child to be carried to see the chains, but I persuaded the mother to carry her secretly. When she came she kissed the chains, took them in her hands and rubbed them on her legs and over her body, and now you ought to see that child! She is as healthy and strong as any one, and how she can run! Her father believes now."

"Did she recover at once after visiting the chains?"

"No, it was some months before she could walk."

"Have you had any other cases lately?"

"Yes, a beautiful deaf and dumb girl came here yesterday. She had just been to visit the Madonna of Divine Love (an image some fifteen miles from Rome). The Madonna said she would restore her speech, but not her hearing, and so she came here to see if the chains could do anything for her. Her mother told her to speak for me, and she muttered these words, 'Thanks—to—the—Madonna.' When the chains were brought out the mother wept a good deal."

"Was the girl's hearing restored after kissing and adoring the chains?"

"No, it seems not."

"Why?"

And with a characteristic Italian shrug of the shoulders he replied: "*Chi lo sa!* Who can tell?"

The sexton informed me that once it was necessary to procure a permit the day before in order to get a blessing from this chain, though now it can be visited at any time. "Why is this?" I asked. "Because the chains are not valued and visited now as they were once." This remark gave me an opportunity to explain to the poor man how wrong all this is,

and how contrary to the word of God, and to the simple gospel of Christ. "You are right, you are right," he replied. But the next day he probably repeated the same story to some one else.

This church has several other relics, the most noted being pieces of the crosses on which Peter and Andrew were crucified, each piece being about two feet long.

It has been the ambition of almost every church in Italy to possess at least one relic. Some churches claim a great many, and consider them among their most valuable treasures. Some of these relics have given position and wealth to many a church or monastery in Italy, attracting thousands of pilgrims annually.

While on a visit to the famous monastery of Monte Vergine I was told that not less than one hundred thousand persons come every year to pay their devotions at this so-called sacred shrine, which claims to be the fortunate possessor of several wonderful relics. An Irish priest conducted me over the establishment, and among other things he showed me a piece of the true cross, a lock of the Virgin's hair, a very ancient cross which once spoke to a man, and a famous picture of the Madonna, painted by Luke. I think it was there too that I saw a feather from the tail of the cock which crew when Peter denied his Lord.

While walking around I noticed a human skeleton carefully enclosed in a glass coffin. On inquiry I learned that it was the body of an organist of the church who died about two hundred years ago. In some way it was discovered that his bones are endowed with miraculous virtue, since which time many wonderful cures have been wrought by touching them.

As I stood gazing upon the repulsive spectacle, sad reminder of our mortal frailty, two peasants approached. I at once retired a few steps to see what they would do. The woman was suffering from a most dreadful case of sore eyes,

and I naturally supposed that she had come there with the hope of being cured. As she stooped to kiss the glass case she seemed serious and sincere, and if I mistake not there was a gleam of hope shining in her face and lighting up her tearful eyes.

She rubbed the glass devoutly with her fingers, and then gently pressed them upon her eyes, evidently hoping in this way to convey the miraculous virtue of the relic through her fingers to her eyes. After repeating the operation several times she looked up into her husband's face with a smile of genuine satisfaction and relief, and said: "Why, I do really feel better already."

This poor woman is only one of many thousands throughout Italy who are deluded and debased by such superstitious practices, practices sanctioned and encouraged by priests and popes. Relics have been sanctified by the prayers and blessings of popes, who have recommended them to the people as objects of devotion, and as mediums of temporal and spiritual blessings. Cardinal Bellarmino attempts to prove that the Bible teaches the worship of relics. For this purpose he quotes Exod. 13 : 19 ; Deut. 34 : 5, 6 ; 2 Kings 13 : 21 ; 23 : 18 ; Isa. 11 : 10 ; Matt. 9 : 20 ; Acts 19 : 12; 5 : 15. According to Den's "Theology," Vol. V., p. 45, the supreme worship of *latria* may be offered to all relics of the Passion, such as the nails of the cross, the crown of thorns, the seamless coat, etc. ; while the worship of *dulia* is allowed to relics of the saints. Popular Catholic books of this country tell of innumerable miracles which have been wrought by relics, and the people are urged to avail themselves of this convenient and mighty source of blessing.

Relics of almost every possible description are said to exist, and in their zeal to increase their number and variety, the priests have been led into the absurd and impossible. There are six seamless garments, each claiming to be genuine. At one time there were thirteen heads, all said to have

belonged to John the Baptist. Eight heads were attributed to Stephen, the first Christian martyr. James the Great had ten. In the same way there are five complete bodies of Andrew and eight of Luke.

There is a story that a tourist on being shown a second head of John the Baptist, asked for an explanation of the anomaly, and the sacristan replied: "Oh! but what you saw before was his head as a boy, while this is his head when he was a man."

The body of the Apostle Bartholomew is declared in the Roman breviary and martyrology to have been translated from Benevento to Rome by the Emperor Otto III. (983–1002), and is declared to be entire. It is attested by bulls of Alexander III. and Sixtus V. But the church of Benevento alleges that the entire body of St. Bartholomew is there still, and produces bulls to that effect from Leo IX., Stephen IX., Benedict XII., Clement VI., Boniface IX., and Urban V., the earliest of which popes reigned fifty years after the death of Otto III. Here then are two entire bodies; but Monte Casino claims the possession of a larger part of the body, and so does Reims. There are besides three heads, one at Naples, one formerly at Reichenau, and a third at Toulouse; two crowns of the head at Frankfort and Prague; part of the skull at Maestricht; a jaw at Steinfeld, part of a jaw at Prague, two jaws in Cologne, and a lower jaw at Murbach; an arm and hand at Gersiac; a second arm, with the flesh, at Bethune; a third arm at Amalfi; a large part of a fourth arm at Foppens; a fifth arm and part of a sixth at Cologne; a seventh arm at Andechs; an eighth arm at Ebers; three large leg or arm bones in Prague; part of an arm at Brussels; and other alleged portions of the body, not to speak of trifles like skin, teeth, and hair, in twenty other places.

Forty nails used in the crucifixion of the Saviour are claimed by Catholic churches, all declared authentic by the pos-

sessors. Of course only three, or at the most four, could have been used. The story is that the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, recovered the true cross and the nails about three hundred years after they had been buried under the ground. Two of these nails she sent to Constantine, who put one into a helmet made expressly for the purpose, and with the other he made a curb for his horse. The third the empress kept for herself, but one day when she was in danger of being lost in a storm at sea she threw it into the water, and at once the raging sea was calmed.

From books and conversations and actual sight I have gathered the following list of relics, which could be almost indefinitely lengthened: Some earth from the desert where Christ fed the five thousand; a piece of the tomb of Lazarus; a lock of the Virgin's hair; a portion of the original copy of the Pentateuch as written by Ezra; the table at which Christ and the apostles reclined when the Lord's Supper was instituted; a part of the Virgin's veil; some earth from the spot on the mountain in Galilee where Christ appeared to "above five hundred brethren at once"; the porphyry slab on which the soldiers cast lots for the seamless garment of Christ; five boards from the Saviour's manger; the first shirt he ever wore; the finger of Thomas, which the Saviour told him to "reach hither" and put into the print of the nails; the title which Pilate wrote and put on the cross; the water-pots used at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and some of the wine; a stone on which Peter knelt to pray when he saw Simon Magus carried off by demons, and which still bears the prints of his knees; the marble slab on which Paul was beheaded; a piece of the tomb of Christ; the column to which Jesus was bound when beaten with rods; the shoes which he wore when a boy; a piece of the Saviour's girdle; a picture of Christ which Peter gave to Pudens; a part of the reed and sponge used at the crucifixion; a piece of the towel with which Christ wiped the apostles' feet; a part of

the Saviour's seamless robe ; so many bottles of the Virgin's milk, that, as Calvin says, "had the breasts of the Most Holy Virgin yielded a more copious supply than is given by a cow, and had she continued to nurse during her whole lifetime, she could scarcely have furnished the quantity which is exhibited" ; a feather from the wing of the angel Michael.

The story connected with this, as related by L. De Sanctis in his "*Roma Papale*," p. 195, is worth repeating. In the early part of this century there lived in Rome a certain priest by the name of Petrucci, who was a genuine type of ignorance, stupidity, and bigotry. Another priest, a custodian of the Vatican relics, made him believe that among the relics there was a feather from the wing of the Archangel Michael, which he had lost when he was fighting with Satan. Petrucci was very anxious to have it, and every day he tormented his friend, the custodian, who finally took a swan's feather, tied it with a ribbon, stamped it with the official seal, and gave it to the stupid priest. With great joy he went off at once to a friend of his, the superior of the hospital of S. Michael, to show him what a treasure he had found. His friend laughed at him and tried to persuade him that Michael was not a feathered animal. Petrucci, however, was not satisfied, and though he began to waver somewhat, still he dared not destroy the "holy feather" lest in so doing he might be committing an act of profanation. He finally decided to commit the case to Michael himself. With this in view he went to the center of the Sistine Bridge, and kneeling down, prayed S. Michael to give him a sure sign, that he might no longer stand in doubt. "If the feather is genuine," said he, "let it float on the water when I throw it down, if not, let it go to the bottom." Full of faith, and trembling with anxiety, he let it fall. Of course it floated. Seeing this the poor priest was almost beside himself, and ran in all haste to the water's edge, hoping to recover the "holy

feather." Some persons who had been watching him, believed the poor man to be crazy, and but for the intervention of friends who happened to be passing, he would have been carried off to the asylum.

A handkerchief worn by Mary; the halter with which Judas hung himself; the wedding ring of the Virgin; the linen cloth in which the body of Christ was wrapped in the sepulchre, containing the likeness of his whole body; a piece of Jacob's ladder; a part of the "swaddling clothes" in which Mary wrapped the infant Jesus; the brazen serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness (which Hezekiah destroyed); the head of John the Baptist in several different churches; bits of the bodies of eleven of the children slain by Herod in Bethlehem; a bottle of Joseph's breath, caught and preserved by an angel while Joseph was cutting wood; the tail of the ass on which Christ made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which was held in the greatest esteem and venerated by the Dominican Fathers at Genoa, who instituted a festival and ordered a mass in honor of the ass; parts of the bodies of many saints, Abraham, Daniel, Jonah, Zechariah, Bartholomew, Peter, James, Paul, and others too numerous to mention; a bottle of Egyptian darkness; Veronica's cloth, containing an exact likeness of the Saviour.

It is said that Veronica was a saint of Jerusalem at the time of Christ who, seeing Jesus pass on his way to be crucified, his brow covered with blood and his face saddened by suffering, removed the sash or scarf which constituted a part of her turban and gave it to the fainting Saviour, that he might wipe his bleeding brow. In return for her kindness, the scarf was handed back to her containing a likeness of the Saviour, disfigured as he was by suffering and saddened by sorrow.

The relics connected with our Lord's sufferings and death are almost innumerable. The pieces of the true cross scattered over the world would be sufficient to make many crosses. Calvin says:

There is no town, however small, which has not some morsel of it; and this is not only in the principal cathedral church of the district, but also in parish churches. There is scarcely an abbey so poor as not to have a specimen. In some places large fragments exist, as at Paris, Poictiers, and Rome. If all the pieces which could be found were collected into a heap they would form a good shipload, though the gospel testifies that a single individual was able to carry the real cross. What effrontery then, thus to fill the whole world with fragments which it would take more than three hundred men to carry. In regard to the crown of thorns, it would seem that its twigs had been planted that they might grow again; otherwise I know not how it could have attained such a size. I would never come to an end were I to go one by one over all the absurd articles they have drawn into this service. At Rome is shown the reed which was put into our Saviour's hands as a scepter; the sponge which was offered to him containing vinegar mixed with gall. How, I ask, were these things recovered? Did they give them to the apostles that they might preserve them for relics, or did they themselves lock them up that they might preserve them for some future period? What blasphemy to abuse the name of Christ by employing it as a cloak for such driveling fables!

This list of relics could easily be extended, but it is not necessary. During the Middle Ages the fabrication of these relics was a lucrative employment.

What shall we say of those who could do such things? Though relics are perhaps less sought after and less revered than formerly, they still have a place and a power in this land. Even now, any Catholic church would consider itself most fortunate if it were the happy possessor of one of the more remarkable of these relics. Thousands of people still believe in their efficacy to heal diseases and work miracles of various kinds. It has already been shown that there are churches that actually collect money to support the worship of these relics.

Let it not be supposed, however, that only the ignorant believe these things. Men and woman of all grades and conditions of life have made pilgrimages to these noted shrines and bowed before these relics, hoping to be greatly blessed thereby. Nor let it be imagined that this reverence

for relics and belief in their miraculous efficacy is confined to China and Italy.

Listen to the words of the late Cardinal Newman, of England :

The Catholic Church, from east to west, from north to south, is according to our conceptions hung with miracles. The store of relics is inexhaustible ; they are multiplied through all lands, and each particle of each has in it at least a dormant, perhaps an energetic virtue of supernatural operation.

At Rome there is the true cross, the crib of Bethlehem, and the chair of St. Peter ; portions of the crown of thorns are kept at Paris ; the holy coat is shown at Treves ; the winding sheet at Turin ; at Monza, the iron crown is formed out of a nail of the cross ; and another nail is claimed for the Duomo of Milan, and pieces of our Lady's habit are to be seen in the Escurial.

The Agnus Dei, blessed medals, the scapular, the cord of St. Francis, all are the medium of divine manifestations and grace. *Crucifixes have bowed the head to the suppliant and Madonnas have bent their eyes upon assembled crowds.*

St. Januarius' blood liquefies periodically at Naples, and St. Winefred's well is the scene of wonders even in our unbelieving country.

Women are marked with the sacred stigmata ; blood has flowed on Fridays from their five wounds, and their heads are crowned with a circle of lacerations. Relics are ever touching the sick, the diseased, the wounded ; sometimes with no result at all, at other times with marked and undeniable efficacy.[1]

If such words as these could fall from the lips of a highly cultivated Englishman like Cardinal Newman, surely one cannot wonder that the ignorant Italian peasant looks upon these relics with awe and veneration, and often bows before them in religious adoration.

But even the sanction of such high authority cannot change the character of such worship and make that pleasing and acceptable to God which he has declared to be displeasing. It is said of King Hezekiah that, "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel ; so that after him was none like

[1] See "The Century," June, 1882, p. 283. Read 2 Thess. 2 and Rev. 13 : 11–18.

him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth." As a prelude to all this it is said of him, "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan," *i. e.*, a piece of brass.

We need a Hezekiah in Italy, for images, relics, and pagan practices and ceremonies have deluded the people and drawn them away from God and the simple gospel. Oh, the plausible devices of Satan for darkening the human heart, for putting error in the place of truth, for leading the soul away from the one polar star of hope and salvation!

CHAPTER IX

IMAGES AND IMAGE WORSHIP

IMAGES constitute an essential piece of furniture of every Catholic church in Italy. A Catholic church without an image would be an anomaly indeed. Many churches contain several scores of them, so that in whatever direction one turns an image is before him, conveniently and invitingly near as an object of admiration or of adoration, usually the latter. Some of these images are hideous and repulsive in the extreme, especially those representing the Saviour on the cross, or just before he was nailed thereto. Is it possible that such representations are calculated to excite in the heart those feelings most acceptable to the exalted and glorified Son of God? Of course the priests will tell you that the common people need these object-lessons, and that having been all their lives accustomed to them, without them they would be unable to worship at all. But, alas, it would seem that even the pope himself requires an object-lesson, for he kneels devoutly before images.

As a rule, these images are representations of the Virgin or of some other saint, especially St. Joseph, or the patron saint of the town or province where the image is found. Since Pius IX. declared St. Joseph to be the universal protector of the Catholic Church, he has become more popular with the people, and hence his statues and images have greatly increased in number and importance.

It is claimed that many images are endowed with miraculous powers, each church being ambitious to possess at least one of this kind, which invariably proves a powerful magnet to draw the people thither. In some cases the reputation of

an image is rather precarious and short-lived, though others have managed to retain their hold upon the people for generations, and even for long centuries. In the latter cases they prove a source of immense income to the church which owns them, it being the custom for each pilgrim or worshiper to bring some kind of offering, which, in the case of the rich, has not unfrequently amounted to thousands of dollars. These noted images are usually covered with jewels of all kinds, which have been left there by grateful pilgrims, who claim to have received a blessing for themselves or for others. Though jewels may be brought by the thousand, I have noticed that there is always room for one more. Of course handsome jewels can always be readily turned into hard cash.

In examining the treasures of one of these famous images I was specially struck with a beautiful pearl containing an image of the Virgin and the infant Jesus. The guide informed me that a poor fisherman was in great distress, his children crying in vain for bread. At length he resolved to visit a certain shrine and pray before an image of the Virgin. Having done this, he returned to his home and his fishing, and to his great joy, instead of a fish, he found a beautiful pearl, which, on examination, he found to contain a faithful representation of the image he had worshiped. He at once concluded that it was a miracle and an evidence that his prayers had been heard, and out of gratitude he hurried back to the shrine to report what had happened, and to leave his wonderful pearl where others might see and believe.

Take your stand with me near one of these images on a great festival occasion ; watch the people as they pour in and out of the church ; see how eager they are to kiss that projecting foot, long since worn bright and smooth by the touch of devout lips ; look how many bow down on the floor and repeat their prayers, meantime keeping their eyes fixed on the image before them ; question some of the more devout

and unsuspecting in the crowd, and then give me your honest impression. How does all this strike you? Is it Christianity or semi-paganism? Is it spiritual service, or is it a very specious and culpable form of idolatry? Is there anything like image worship here? Often have I witnessed such scenes, but never without a twinge in my heart, for I never failed to receive the impression that many of those before me rose no higher in their thoughts than the material image on which they had so intently fixed their gaze, and that their worship was in no way superior to that offered in India or China, or in any other heathen land.

I once said to an ex-priest: "Is it true that image worship exists in the Catholic churches of Italy?"

He replied without a moment's hesitation: "Yes, pure and simple. Perhaps," he added, "the more intelligent make the distinction between the image and that represented by it, but thousands fix their thoughts on the image alone, and actually pay their devotions to the piece of wood or stone which is before them."

Once convince the people that these images work miracles and confer great spiritual blessings—and many of the priests leave no stone unturned to accomplish this purpose—is it not natural for them to conclude that they are worthy of veneration and adoration?

I have in my possession a remarkable book published in Rome, in 1797, "*De' Prodigi Avvenuti in Molte Sacre Immagini*," etc., with the approval of the Vatican authorities and written by the "Apostolic Examiner of the Clergy." On page 87 I find the following words:

> In the new series of marvels which the providence of God had reserved until our times, it seems that he also wished to confirm the faith of the Catholic Church and to animate and authenticate the pious custom of the faithful in preserving and offering worship to the Most Holy Images, not only in our churches and oratories, but also in private houses, and especially in the public streets, and in the presence of all.

This book contains the pictures and the history of twenty-six "holy images," all of which, it is claimed, possess miraculous powers. The author, at very great pains, has undertaken to prove that these twenty-six images have been seen again and again to raise and lower their eyelids, move the pupils of the eyes up and down and from side to side, and in some cases even to lift the eyebrows. These were all accepted as facts by the Vatican authorities, hundreds of persons having been formally examined for the purpose.

In the Church of Saint Andrea, in Pistoia, there is a wonder-working crucifix, which the people greatly revere. The story is that many years ago this image descended from the cross and walked all the way to Rome and back, accomplishing this feat in two nights and one day. The first morning after its departure the priest was greatly surprised to find that it was gone, but the next morning when he entered the church, great was his joy to find it hanging on the cross in its usual place. He was struck with the fact that its feet were covered with mud, as if it had been on a long journey, and while he was meditating upon this strange fact in the stillness of the early morning, and puzzling his brain over the possible solution of the mystery, to his surprise and relief the image itself informed him that it had been on a pilgrimage to Rome. With a great flourish of trumpets the miracle was announced, and the faithful came by the thousand to pay their devotions to the holy image, and to receive a blessing.

Images are often placed upon a sort of bier and carried on the shoulders of men through the streets and around the town, the long procession of priests and people marching to the music of a brass band. This custom has given rise to an expression, which, when I first heard it, surprised and puzzled me no little. As the men march along they sometimes lose step, and so the great awkward image goes bobbing from one side to the other like a drunken man, and hence the people say of one who goes staggering home after having taken too

much wine, "Why, that fellow is as drunk as a saint." When the procession is passing, men stand with hat in hand, and when the image reaches them not a few in the crowd fall upon their knees and remain with crossed hands and bowed heads till the sacred object is out of sight.

One summer I happened to be in a little mountain town on a great festival occasion, the anniversary of the patron saint. The image was adorned with shining robes and flashing jewels, a crown on its head and a rosary in its hand. Thus arrayed it was placed upon a kind of bier and carried with great pomp through the town and some distance beyond to a small chapel, the people following in crowds, and very many kneeling by the roadside waiting to catch a blessing as the image was carried by them. As the procession passed us, a young Roman who was standing near me, with an impatient and even troubled look on his face, deliberately turned his back upon the whole affair, and when questioned by one of his companions, with an unmistakable ring of indignation in his voice he replied: "I am sick and tired of this nonsense and heathenism." These words express the feelings of hundreds and thousands of Italians with reference to this and a good many other things connected with Romanism in Italy.

Unless the people attribute some special virtue to the image itself, why all this ado about images? And then, why is it that of several images of the same saint, one is greatly preferred to the other, some being abandoned to the dust and silence of a little side chapel, while others are visited by multitudes of people, many of whom come long distances for the express purpose of prostrating themselves before the image, just as any heathen before his idol. Who can witness such scenes unmoved, and all the more because it is called Christianity, and believed to be such by these deluded devotees, though not by many of the priests who encourage them in it?

If there is no such thing as image worship in the Catholic Church, why do we find such expressions as the following: "Whose sacred image is venerated in this church?" "Whenever the worship of one sacred image ceased, zeal for another very soon manifested itself. And, oh," exclaims the author of the above words, "in imagination suppress these places of prayer, these refuges of religious enthusiasm, and tell me if it would not mean the death of all public and spontaneous devotion!" Then the undisguised expression prominently set forth in a church in Rome: "Alms for the *worship* of the holy chains." The Italian word *culto* used in this connection means nothing less than worship, and is just the word we are using every day to express this idea. What then shall we call this? If it is not equivalent to the idolatry so severely condemned in God's word, then I know not what name to give it.

But in spite of such irrefutable proof to the contrary, let us even suppose, as some will tell you, that the people use the image as a means of bringing more vividly before their minds that which the image represents. In most cases these are images of saints, and hence the service simply rises to what might be called a higher form of idolatry, viz, saint worship. The Lord is a jealous God, unwilling that anything should stand between us and him, and when such is the case he calls it idolatry and severely condemns it. Dare we do less?

Apart from this, however, all who bow down before images of any kind, whatever be their motive, are disobeying a solemn command of God, who declared amid thunderings and lightnings which made Mount Sinai quake: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

Alas! alas! what an endless succession of woes has come upon mankind through persistent and stubborn disobedience of this one command! Surely God is wiser than man, and he had sufficient reasons when he forbade the making of images and bowing down before them. Experience proves that the use of images in religious worship ends by producing exactly the opposite results of those intended. But here, as in the Garden of Eden, the father of lies has called in question the veracity of God himself, and has succeeded in blinding the minds of the great mass of mankind, including millions of those who call themselves Christians.

Multitudes of Roman Catholics do not know that the second commandment was ever given, the authorities of the church being very careful to keep it out of the catechism and other books likely to fall into the hands of the people. A woman in Pistoia told me that her conversion was due to the reading of the second commandment and the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, which passages she had never seen till, in the providence of God, an evangelical friend gave her a Bible. Till then it had never occurred to her that the use of images in religious worship was contrary to God's will. Once convinced, she acted on her conviction, and a complete change in doctrine and life was the happy result.

Every one knows that the Church of Rome, in order to favor the worship of images, has taken the second commandment from the Decalogue, and has had the effrontery to paint Moses holding the Tables of the Law, on which are written the Ten Commandments, not as they were given by God, but as restored by itself. In the Church of Rome not one in a thousand—I will not say among the people, but among the priests—knows that the church has taken away that commandment, and hence they believe that it is heresy not to bow before images.[1]

[1] De Sanctis, in "*Roma Papale*," p. 435.

Doctor McCaul, in a pamphlet entitled, "Why does the Church of Rome Hide the Second Commandment from the People?" says:

> Here, then, are twenty-nine catechisms in use in Rome and Italy, France, Belgium, Austria, Bavaria, Silesia, Poland, Ireland, England, Spain, and Portugal, in twenty-seven of which the second commandment is totally omitted; in two mutilated and only a portion expressed. Is not, then, the charge proved that the Church of Rome hides the second commandment from the people?

On page 262 he gives a minute description of what is called "the adoration of the cross," the service being conducted with great pomp. When the deacon whose duty it is to remove the black veil from the cross has chanted the words, "'Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world; come, let us worship,' . . the pope first, then all the cardinals, bishops, prelates, and people prostrate themselves, bow the head, and worship the cross." Later, while the choir is singing, the pope, barefooted, descends from his throne and prostrates himself before the cross and kisses and worships it, the cardinals, bishops, prelates, and others present following his example. Though the ceremony is said to be very touching to many sincere Catholics, especially pilgrims from a distance, who may be present in Rome at the time, still is it not idolatry pure and simple, a direct violation of God's express command? In the Roman Missal we read:

> The priest, taking off his shoes, advances to adore the cross (*ad adorandam crucem*), genuflecting thrice before he kisses it. . . Then the ministers of the altar and the other clerks and the laity, two and two, genuflecting thrice as aforesaid, adore the cross (*crucem adorant*). . . We adore thy cross, O Lord (*Crucem tuam adoramus, Domine*).

Whatever Roman Catholic theologians may say to the contrary, these words can mean nothing less than worship, and with such high authority and example this dreadful evil has spread all over Italy.

The Council of Trent, during its twenty-fifth session, decreed as follows:

The images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the saints, are to be had and retained, especially in churches, and due honor and veneration to be paid to them; not because there is believed to be any divinity or virtue in them, on account of which they are to be worshiped, or because for them anything is to be asked, or because trust is to be reposed in images, as the heathens of old put their trust in idols; but because the honor which is exhibited to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent; so that through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads and lie prostrate, we adore Christ and pay veneration to the saints, whose likeness the images bear.

This is almost the identical language used by the heathen to justify their use of idols. Saint Augustine in commenting on Ps. 96 : 11, says:

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols. But some disputant, who thinks himself learned, comes forward and says: "I do not worship a stone, nor that image which is without feeling; for it is not possible that your prophets should have known that they have eyes and see not, and I be ignorant that the image in question has no soul, and sees not with its eyes, nor hears with its ears. I do not worship that; but I bow before what I see, and serve him I do not see." Who is he? "Some invisible power," he replies, "which presides over that image." By giving this sort of explanation of their images, they think themselves very clever, as not worshipers of idols.

Leo XIII., in a recent encyclical, has ordered the teaching of the schools of religious philosophy to be strictly conformed to the "*Summa*" of Thomas Aquinas, which says:

The same reverence should be displayed toward an image of Christ and toward Christ himself, and seeing that Christ is adored with the adoration of *latria* (*i. e.*, supreme religious worship), it follows that his image is to be adored with the adoration of *latria*.[1]

The cross is adored with the same adoration as Christ, that is, with the adoration of *latria*, and for that reason we address and supplicate the cross *just as we do the Crucified himself*.[2]

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[1] "*Summa*," Sec. II., 25, 3. [2] *Ibid.*, Sec. III., 25, 4.

In that images of the saints denote their excellence, they may be, and ought to be, adored with a certain inferior adoration of *dulia*, like the saints themselves whom they represent, though not with that absolute kind which is offered to their prototyes, but relative only.[1]

Latria, according to Bellarmino and other Catholic theologians, is the name given to the very highest kind of worship, while *dulia* is a sort of inferior service. This distinction, however, has no warrant from the Greek Testament, which has the verb *douleuo* (δουλεύω), "to serve," in the following texts, where God's service is meant: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt. 6 : 24); "Serving the Lord with all humility" (Acts 20 : 19); "He that in these things serveth Christ" (Rom. 14 : 18); "Turned to God from idols to serve the living God" (1 Thess. 1 : 9).

Images have proved a curse to the Catholic Church, materializing the worship and leading thousands into base idolatry. Could these images be removed entirely and gathered into some great museum as objects of curiosity, or better still, condemned to the fate of the brazen serpent, the good effects would appear at once, and the truly sincere would become far more spiritual in their worship. The words of the Saviour to the Samaritan woman, "Ye worship ye know not what," are they not equally applicable to thousands of Catholics who in their worship are so bound to forms and place?

"Dost thou wish to pray in a temple?" says Augustine; "pray in thyself; but first become a temple of God." This is a lesson that Roman Catholics need especially to learn. Without an effort and the constant study of God's word, the worship of almost any one would become more or less materialized. Who has not sometimes been tempted to suppose that a material object would help his devotions? Who has not sometimes longed for an audible voice from the Unseen One? But such temptations should be earnestly resisted, for the Lord has told us that we must walk by faith and not by

[1] "*Summa*," Sec. II., 94, 2.

sight. When his disciples were mourning over his departure from them the Saviour surprised them no little by saying: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away." And when Thomas would not believe till he had seen, the Lord rebuked him and pronounced a blessing upon all who believe without seeing, who walk by faith and not by sight.

A short time ago in conversation with a cultivated English lady, I was endeavoring to persuade her that it was inconsistent and wrong in her to go into Catholic churches and bow before their altars and images to pray. I tried to make her feel that as an Englishwoman and a Protestant her example would be bad. I asked her why she did not pray at home in her own quiet, private room. To my surprise she declared that she preferred to pray before an altar or an image.

"But," I replied, "how can you justify yourself in this? Is it not wrong to pray before an image?"

"I do not think so," she responded, "for I do not worship the image, but God."

"But," I replied, "God has expressly forbidden not only the worship of images, but the bowing down before them, and even the making of them, and having them about us in our churches."

"But how can it be wrong when I find it helps me, and makes my prayers more real?"

To my sorrow I found that further conversation on the subject promised to be disagreeable, and not at all convincing, for it was evident that she was guided by her own feelings and not by God's word, a course which cannot be too strongly condemned.

Oh, how subtle are the temptations of the evil one! How easily he can flatter and mislead men! The Saviour said: "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father

seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The more one depends on the external in his worship, the less there will be of genuine spirituality. Lactantius, called the Christian Cicero, who wrote in the latter part of the third century, said: "Beyond all doubt, wherever an image is, there is no religion."[1] God says: "They that make a graven image are all of them vanity" (Isa. 44 : 9). "Their molten images are wind."

Alas for Italy, where every Catholic church has its image or images, before which the people are constantly bowing to offer their prayers and supplications!

[1] *Lact.*, "*Divin. Instit.*," *Lib.* II., c. 19, *tom.* I. Paris, 1748.

CHAPTER X

WOMEN AND PRIESTCRAFT

THE strength of Romanism in Italy depends chiefly on the power the priests have over women. Comparatively few men are regular in their attendance on the church services, and a great many have entirely abandoned confession. Not a few hate the priests and have nothing but evil to say of them. Sad to say, many of these have drifted into infidelity or entire religious indifference. Most women, however, visit the churches regularly to repeat their prayers, to say mass, to confess to the priest, and to perform penances of various kinds.

Many women have no confidence in the priests, and with good reason, and yet a kind of superstitious fear keeps them in bondage. Others blindly follow where the priests lead, having calmly committed their entire spiritual interests into their hands. Many a woman who knows too well the character of numbers of the priests will justify herself in her course on the ground that it is not the priest but the office that she reveres, and that the priest's character does not in the least affect the efficacy of his religious functions. Such reasoning is doubtless very agreeable to unworthy priests, but at the same time it can only be demoralizing to both priest and people.

This divorcing of religion and morality, alas, so common in Romanism, has been a source of fearful evil in this country. Now and then a woman is found who neither reveres nor fears the priests. Lately an anti-clerical society has been formed in Rome among the women, the object of which is to liberate women from ignorance, superstition, and priestcraft.

Could we but lead the women back to the old paths, the chief pillar of Romanism would soon be broken, the churches would be deserted, the priests would pine and perish, and the great edifice itself would gradually crumble to dust. Though something has been accomplished, still the day of woman's redemption from the power of Romanism does not seem near at hand. Ignorance is so general, prejudices are so deep, and the spirit of conservatism is so strong, that comparatively few women have been able to throw off the shackles of priestcraft and come into the true liberty of the children of God.

The great mass are still in the fogs of superstition and error, treading a dark and uncertain pathway, having no experience of that true light of the knowledge of the glory of God which is given to us in the face of Jesus Christ. They have been taught to believe that darkness is light, and error truth, and that uncertainty is a necessary part of religion.

In many ways women, influenced and guided by the priests, have greatly hindered the progress of the truth in Italy. A husband who has become interested in the gospel, who finds pleasure in attending evangelical meetings, and gives reason to hope that he is sincerely in earnest, and perhaps not far from the kingdom of heaven, is frequently turned back and prevented from taking the final step by the persistent and often bitter opposition of his wife, who, poor creature, honestly believes that he is about to bring temporal and spiritual ruin upon himself and family.

A mother in her blind zeal for the Church of Rome and through superstitious fear of bringing down some evil upon her head, throws herself in the way of her own son, who has begun to attend Protestant meetings, sometimes driving him into utter religious indifference or into bold infidelity.

An interesting and promising young man, now a faithful and earnest evangelical, passed through a fearful ordeal in

his home, and only the grace of God and great courage and patience on his part, enabled him to persevere and remain firm in the midst of such difficulties, and to decide to obey God and his enlightened conscience rather than his blind and bigoted mother.

Another youth, seventeen years of age, was called upon to pass through a fiery furnace of his mother's own lighting. She is a widow and he is the elder of two children. She has shown herself to be a blind, superstitious, and persecuting Catholic, possessing the qualities of a first-class inquisitor. On hearing that her son was attending Protestant meetings she began a regular system of persecution.

She quarreled with him continually, making his life at home a burden. She threatened to put him out of the house and to leave him to shift for himself. She assured him that financial troubles and losses were already beginning on his account, and that if he continued in his course her shop would soon be deserted and her little stock of goods would remain so much dead capital on her hands. She even threatened to kill him some night while he was asleep, if he did not abandon the Protestant meetings. With angry emotion she insisted that his present unnatural and ungrateful course, if persisted in, would bring him to the graveyard and her to the mad-house. These facts the poor boy gave me himself, while tears glistened in his eyes and emotion quivered in his voice.

Such women are the delight of many priests and prove a mighty power in their hands. Of course it cannot be denied that there are many good women in Italy sincerely and honestly attached to the Church of Rome. They have never known anything else and through her they hope to find salvation. They honestly endeavor to do their duty and try faithfully to serve God according to the light they have received. They have always heard that theirs is the only true church, out of which there can be no salvation for them.

Of Protestantism they know nothing but evil, and the priests have written it indelibly on their minds that there is nothing so displeasing to God and so fearful and fatal to themselves as to leave the Holy Mother Church to become a heretic, a Protestant.

To many of these women the Church is dearer than life itself, for the Church means salvation. The priests are well aware that the strength of Romanism lies just here, and they guard their interests with zealous care. They do not forget that "she who rocks the cradle rules the world." Women are more religious, conservative, and credulous than men, and in Italy they are much more ignorant and superstitious, and hence they are easily led by the priest.

Often, on visiting a new place to preach the gospel, the room will be well filled with men, but not a woman present. In one place where I preached, though the hall was crowded almost to suffocation with men, many of them standing through the entire service, not a woman in town dared make one of the audience. Two or three of the more courageous ones sat in the room just above the pulpit and heard the gospel for the first time through an auger hole which I made in the floor for the purpose.

CHAPTER XI

PENANCE

ROMANISM, like paganism, has taught the people to practise self-imposed austerities and bodily inflictions in order to atone for sin and to give merit. Penance is an important part of religious worship in this country, for the Church of Rome teaches that through penance the soul is purified, sin is atoned for, souls are liberated from purgatory, and great merit is gained. Penance consists of prayers, in bearing sickness, pain, etc., in observing special rules and regulations, in self-denial and severe bodily infliction.

It is said of Saint Liguori that, "In order to conceal the severity with which he disciplined his body, he frequently retired to a cell or cave. One day his secretary had to burst open his door and snatch the *disciplina* (or scourge) out of his hands, fearing lest the violence with which he scourged himself might cause his death."

It is recorded of Saint Pacifico that:

> Besides the regular discipline prescribed by rule three times in the week, he cruelly scourged himself thrice each day with chains or cords, so as to fill all those with horror who heard the whistlings of the lash or saw the abundance of the blood which he shed during the flagellation. Covered with hair shirts, he undertook long journeys, walking over thorns or sharp stones, slept little, etc. Thus did he enter into glory by sorrow and tribulation.

Saint Veronica says of herself: "Still I made sufferings for myself, but all without my confessor's leave, such as the *disciplina* (or the scourge), walking on my bare knees, pricking myself with a pin, kissing some filthy spot, and beating myself with thistles."

The biographer of Saint Joseph of the Cross relates of him that:

He made it a rule to look no one whomsoever in the face. He would not permit himself the liberty of lifting his eyes to the roof of his cell. He would not even smell a flower. Bareheaded in all seasons, he wore under his rough and heavy habit divers shirts and chains, which he was careful to vary in order to keep the sense of torment ever fresh. Besides, he used the *disciplina* to a severe degree, and when at the age of forty his superiors obliged him to wear sandals, he placed between them and his feet a quantity of small nails.

But the most tremendous instrument which he devised against himself was a cross about a foot in length, set with rows of sharp nails, which he fastened tight over his shoulders, so as to open there a wound, which never afterward closed. Another similar but smaller cross he wore attached to his breast. But his abridgment of sleep was truly wonderful, and he never took it save seated on the ground or cramped up in his little bed, often with his head leaning against a piece of wood jutting from the wall. No less singular was his abstinence. For the last thirty years of his life he entirely overcame that most insatiable of wants, thirst, absolutely abstaining not merely from wine and water, but from every liquid whatsoever.

These penances were practised not merely to subdue the body, but they were intended as atonement and satisfactions made to God for sins. With this view penances can be nothing less than a Satanic counterfeit and substitute for the sufferings and merits of Christ. Though the more cruel forms of penance have largely passed away, this heathen custom is still sadly prevalent in Italy. Pilgrimages, the repeating of many prayers, fastings, and other ascetic exercises and self-imposed denials, are still practised with the delusive hope of atoning for sin and gaining thereby pardon and peace.

A cultivated Italian gentleman, who was once a monk, told me that in his youth he often performed acts of penance, and that at one time he kneeled down on his fingers, remaining in this unnatural and painful position seven hours, hoping thus to atone for sin and find peace.

The repeating of many prayers, or of the same prayer

many times, in order to gain merit, is still very common. Often on visiting Catholic churches I have watched the more devout among the worshipers as they went from altar to altar, repeating several prayers before each till they had made the entire circuit.

Some time ago an Italian gentleman was visiting a small town in the province of Naples. He found the streets almost deserted, the people having gone to a very special service in the church. Knowing that the priests are constantly inventing something new in order to attract the people, he concluded to follow them to see what was going on. He found the church crowded, all being deeply interested in a strange procession intended to represent the scene of the crucifixion.

The procession was led by a man clad in a red gown, carrying on his shoulders two great beams in the form of a cross. On his head he wore a crown of real thorns, the thorns piercing the flesh so as to cause the blood to trickle down his forehead. He was followed by two other men, each carrying a cross on his shoulders. Behind these three walked some fifty men wearing masks and naked down to the waist. Each man had a scourge of knotted cords in his hand, with which he was beating the bare shoulders of the one immediately before him, actually causing the blood to flow.

This holy exercise, as the priests called it, lasted a long time, till the poor, deluded people taking part in it were quite exhausted. Some of those who submitted to this indignity were doubtless hired by the priests for the purpose, but others were sincerely hoping thereby to gain great merit and shorten their stay in purgatory.

In Southern Italy there is a society of priests who call themselves the "*Appassionisti*," and it is quite common for them to use the scourge, as two of our Italian preachers, who once belonged to this society, can testify. The scourging is usually done at the conclusion of a discourse and in the

following manner: The instrument of torture, which consists of a number of small cords, bristling with firm metal points, is carefully prepared and concealed under the preacher's cowl just before he goes into the pulpit. The cowl is so made that by simply untying a little string the shoulders of the wearer are left bare, and the scourge can be applied to the naked skin. At the conclusion of his discourse the speaker breaks forth into a passionate appeal to the people, declaring that he is willing to shed his blood for them, even to give his life for them on the spot. At this juncture he jerks the scourge from its hiding-place, pulls the string that leaves his shoulders bare, and begins to beat himself unmercifully. As the beating proceeds, the people often become greatly excited. The preacher takes out his handkerchief, wipes the bleeding wounds, and then holds it up before the people all red and gory. Groans and cries are heard in every part of the house, and often women faint and fall senseless to the floor. At this juncture another priest, according to previous agreement, rushes up to the pulpit, lays hold of the cruel, merciless hand of the preacher, begging him to desist and save his life. After much exhortation he succeeds, and leads the wounded, bleeding man to the sacristy, where his wounds are washed and salve is at once applied. And, *mirabile dictu*, while this process is going on the priests are laughing together about the whole matter, and especially over the effect produced on the people.

When the preacher has once declared his intention or willingness to die for the people and begins to scourge himself, he must continue till he is forced to stop by some one else, otherwise the people will call him a cowardly hypocrite.

On one occasion, some thirty years ago, when one of our oldest ministers, who was once a prominent priest, was thus scourging himself, the man whose business it was to come and stop him failed to appear, and having endured the beating as long as he could, or cared to, he was compelled to stop of

his own accord, thus running the risk of scandalizing the people and seriously injuring his own reputation. When he reached the sacristy he was so enraged that he gave his fellow-priest a good beating then and there.

Another preacher tells me that when he was a boy he knew numbers of women who would do penance by fasting three entire days, some of them actually fainting from sheer weakness. In Southern Italy it is still common for the women to beat their naked chests with stones till the blood flows, hoping thus to atone for sin.

A most horrible form of penance consists in licking out the tongue full length, pressing it on the stone floor, and crawling thus on hands and knees from the door of the church to the high altar at the other end, tracks of blood often being left by the poor deluded victim. This I have seen, and I shall never forget it.

An evangelical minister, who was once a priest and belonged to the "Company of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary," tells me that early every morning, before day, at the ringing of a bell, he and his companions were accustomed to gather in a large, unlighted room and scourge their naked bodies, this being one of the regulations of the order.

Not in Italy alone is this form of penance practised. Rev. H. Grattan Guinness[1] tells us that, "*There exist this day in London shops for the sale of instruments of bodily torture.*" Rev. O. M. Miller, of Colorado,[2] gives some startling facts concerning an Order of Penitents in that State and New Mexico. The order is sworn to secrecy, with death as the penalty of its violation. The Penitents are all Mexican Roman Catholics. The chief method of punishment is self-flagellation. The whip is about a yard long, thick and heavy, made of plaited soap-weed, and often barbed with cactus thorns. The victim is stripped to the waist, wearing nothing

[1] "Romanism and the Reformation," p. 55.
[2] "Examiner," New York, Feb. 5, 1891.

but a pair of cotton drawers. A procession is formed with brother penitents before and in rear of the victim. As they move slowly along he holds the whip in both hands, and at each step, bending far forward, he brings the whip down with all his might, first over one shoulder and then over the other, until his back is raw and the blood trickles down to the ground. Before the whipping begins a deep gash is cut down each side of the back, in order to make it more sensitive to the blows. Great crosses, weighing sometimes two hundred pounds, are carried long distances, the poor victims staggering and often falling helpless under them. Sometimes a companion leaps upon the cross from behind and crushes its bearer to the ground, perhaps killing him. Often a bag of thorny cactus is worn under the cross on the bare shoulders. The needles of this cactus will easily penetrate a shoe, and yet these people, with hands, knees, and feet bare will crawl over this plant for half a mile at a time, marking their path with blood. The object of all this penance each spring is that *they may wash out in their own blood the sins of the past year.*

How sad that such heathen practices still exist, not only in Italy, but in England and America!

In "*Roma Papale*," page 434, the author describes a scene which he had witnessed many times in Rome. The church is very dimly lighted by two small lamps, each surmounted by a skull covered with red paper. On the fifth evening of the week of spiritual exercises, the preacher takes for his subject the justice of God, which must be satisfied by the sinner. When he has brought his hearers to the point of feeling that there is no hope for them, the speaker proposes as a remedy the prayers of the priest; whereupon six barefooted monks with violet-colored robes enter the chapel and take their stand before the pulpit. The preacher explains the situation and exhorts them to pray. In sad, mournful tones, they begin to sing: "*Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo*" (Forgive,

O Lord, forgive thy people). The preacher declares that prayer alone is not sufficient, but that to simple prayer must be added humiliation, for though the intercession of priests is very powerful, it must be repeated again and again. This being said, the six barefooted monks kneel down, and while in this position sing the same words the second time.

"I feel," says the preacher, "that your sins are very great, and that some of your hearts are so obstinate that the mercy of God cannot have free course." Then raising his voice he calls out to the priests: "Cry louder, cry louder," and falling upon their faces they sing with all their might the same words: "*Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo.*" But the preacher is not satisfied, and with an exclamation of disappointment and discouragement he dismisses the priests, bidding them continue their prayers in another room. In the semi-darkness, and amidst the solemn hush that follows, the sermon begins anew, and the speaker announces the startling fact that as prayers and humiliation have availed nothing, blood is necessary, and in excited tones he declares that he is willing to shed his own for the salvation of his hearers. As quick as thought he draws from his bosom a scourge, very terrible in appearance, but harmless in fact, and begins to beat himself as if he really intended to shed his blood for the people. Great excitement prevails, cries and groans are heard in every direction. Some rush up to the speaker to wrench the cruel scourge from his hands, while many continue to weep and beg for mercy. At last the scourging ceases, the tumult subsides, and the preacher assures the people in the name of God that justice has been satisfied and mercy obtained.

The word repentance, which means so much in the Bible, has lost its original signification among most Catholics of this country. The church authorities have usually defined the word as meaning penance. "If one sin the second time he must repent for a week; if he sin the third time he must re-

pent forty days," etc., says a Catholic book of rules and regulations. Here repent means simply, do penance, the length and character of the penance depending on the number of times one has sinned. The Catholic Church plainly teaches that through penance a man becomes a sort of half-saviour of himself, and thus merits the favor of God.

C. L. Trevier, in "How I Came Out from Rome," p. 121, says:

> But penance never brings peace to the troubled soul, be it ever so severe and patiently and persistently practised. Indeed, the Church of Rome possesses no means of giving peace to the sinner, nor does it even profess to have it. On the contrary, it teaches that assurance of pardon and peace is decided presumption. The Council of Trent declared that "It cannot be said that any one may have the *presumptuous* assurance that his sins are pardoned, nor rest in this assurance, for it is vain and altogether inconsistent with piety." We must also beware of asserting that it is needful that those who are truly justified should feel in themselves an assured conviction of it.
>
> But of what benefit to a sinner is his pardon and justification, if it is only a presumptuous boldness on his part to believe that he is pardoned and justified? If he is reduced perpetually to doubt the fulfillment of God's promises with regard to him, where are his privileges? What advantages accrue to him from the service of God? Doubtless we ought never to be without fear on account of our weakness, but is it not a serious insult to God to harbor the slightest fear as to the faithfulness with which he fulfills his promises?
>
> Now all the practices and teachings of the Church of Rome are of a nature to keep up and perpetuate doubts and fears. Human intervention is constantly required in the relations between the sinner and his God, and it is easy to understand that a man can give no assurance about that which concerns the soul of his fellow-creatures. Each one will feel that he cannot have any assurances, although the question is one in which God's word is involved; but the laity of the Church of Rome only know as much of the word of God as the priest tells them, and the latter may read it only on condition of finding in it all the teaching of his Church; which is as much as to say that he does not know it at all. It may then be said that the Church of Rome possesses no means of giving peace to the sinner. In my long experience as a confessor I have had multiplied proofs of this fact.

The same writer tells of a very worthy lady who often came to him to confess, and who willingly received his visits after he had separated himself from the Church of Rome, and who also accepted from his hands a New Testament :

One day when I was at this lady's house I observed the New Testament on the mantelpiece. I asked her if she continued to read it, and from the embarrassment with which she answered me I supposed not. I represented to her how wrong it was to neglect the study of it, since it was the only means by which she could be assured of the love of God to sinners, and of the gift of his grace in Jesus Christ, who came into the world for the express purpose of reconciling them with his Father. "I do not think," I continued, "that you have found in the Church of Rome what your heart desires and needs. For many years I have heard you confess ; you have ever made, with the utmost care, a general confession of your whole life ; you have perfectly fulfilled all the works of satisfaction I recommended to you with the hope of appeasing the justice of God ; you have confessed and communicated frequently ; you have observed with the most scrupulous exactness all the rules of your church. Has all this procured you peace?" With a sigh which touched me painfully, she answered : "I cannot say I have ever enjoyed that peace." I exhorted her earnestly to read the New Testament, assuring her that there she would find the certain means of obtaining and enjoying the peace of God ! Alas ! I have heard that after I left Dijon she replaced herself under the direction of the priests and would of course be told that though the peace of God may certainly be sought for, the idea that it was possible to gain possession of it was an insane arrogance of which heretics alone are capable. The Church of Rome, I repeat, therefore, teaches officially that none of the means she has at her disposal can give the sinner any assurance of peace.

It is often the case that those who perform the required acts of penance are the sincere ones, the weary and heavy-laden, who are honestly seeking rest and peace. How sad that they should thus be kept in bondage and darkness all the days of their life ! Romanism, like paganism, has introduced this human element of penance into religion, which is dishonoring to God and often ruinous to man. Only pure Christianity makes man entirely dependent for his salvation on the infinite merits of Christ, teaching us that

"by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," but yet giving us the sweet assurance that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The parallel between Romanism and paganism, which has been very partially treated in the foregoing pages, is most striking and suggestive, and has been briefly and tellingly set forth by H. Grattan Guinness in "Romanism and the Reformation," p. 322 :

All through its history idolatry has been the most marked characteristic of the papal system. Romanism is simply the old Roman paganism revived under Christian names. Romanism and paganism bear to each other the most exact and extraordinary resemblance.

Had paganism its temples and altars, its pictures and images? So has popery. Had paganism its use of holy water and its burning of incense? So has popery. Had paganism its tonsured priests, presided over by a *pontifex maximus*, or sovereign pontiff? So has popery; and it stamps the very name, which is purely heathen in origin, upon the coins, medals, and documents of the arrogant priest by whom it is governed. Had paganism its claims of sacerdotal infallibility? So has popery. Had paganism its adoration of a visible representation of deity carried in state on men's shoulders? So has popery. Had paganism its ceremony of kissing the feet of the sovereign pontiff? So has popery. Had paganism its college for pontiffs? So has popery, in the college of cardinals. Had paganism its religious orders? So has popery. Had paganism its stately robes, its crowns and crosiers of office? So has popery. Had paganism its adoration of idols, its worship of the queen of heaven, its votive offerings? So has popery. Had paganism its rural shrines and processions? So has popery. Had paganism its pretended miracles, its speaking images, and weeping images, and bleeding images? So has popery. Had paganism its begging orders and fictitious saints? So has popery. Had paganism its canonization of saints, as in the deification of the dead Cæsars? So has popery. Had paganism its idolatrous calendar and numerous festivals? So has popery. Had paganism its enforced celibacy, its mystic signs, its worship of relics? So has popery. Had paganism its cruel persecution of those who opposed idolatry? So has popery. Was paganism Satanically inspired? So *is* popery. God overthrew paganism; Satan revived it under Christian names; but God shall yet destroy it and sweep its hateful presence from the earth.

CHAPTER XII

INTOLERANCE AND PERSECUTION

THE spirit of Romanism in Italy has not greatly changed since the days of the Inquisition. If we are spared the dreadful scenes of that fiery time it is due to the general increase of intelligence, the healthy growth of public opinion, and the revival of the spirit of liberty and free thought, and not to the removal of the intolerant and persecuting spirit of Romanism. The Italian conscience of this decade will not allow the brutal persecution once authorized and practised in the name of God and religion. The king and the parliament, and not the pope and the Vatican, are supreme.

Theoretically, perfect liberty is guaranteed to every Italian, but practically this is yet impossible. The real animus of Romanism has not greatly changed, as many evangelicals have learned to their sorrow. Outward conditions have materially altered, but wherever the clerical party predominates, there the spirit of persecution will manifest itself. Persecution takes many forms, the least brutal and violent often proving the most successful and the hardest to bear.

A common form of persecution is used when a Roman Catholic landlord threatens a poor laborer with loss of work and bread if he continues to attend evangelical meetings. One poor man who was found with a Bible was given to understand by the intolerant landlord that he wanted no Bible-reading men in his employ.

A man owns a little shop, by means of which he manages to eke out a living for himself and family. He becomes a Protestant, or perhaps simply attends Protestant meetings. Through the influence of the parish priest, one by one his

customers drop off, and soon he finds, to his sorrow, that his little stock of goods is so much dead capital on his hands and his children are begging in vain for bread, for he has been effectually boycotted. It is said in Revelation of "the beast" that he will prohibit all dealings with the so-called "heretics" and that none will be allowed to buy from them or to sell to them.

The many charitable institutions in Italy, which until lately have been in the hands of the priests, have been used against evangelicals and their work.

Some time ago a Catholic bishop of Southern Italy distributed a large sum of money to the poor, but in making the announcement he was careful to state that none need apply for aid who attended the Protestant meetings and unless they were willing to promise never to attend them again. Shortly after this occurrence the evangelist in the place wrote that several of his hearers had been drawn away by this wicked device. When he visited them in their homes they professed to be unchanged in heart, poverty having constrained them to accept the uncharitable and unchristian conditions of the bishop. Something like this has been repeated hundreds of times.

Sickness is also a favorite time, and the hospital is the favorite place for the priest to practise his petty persecutions. Entreaty, promise, threat, and cruel neglect are all freely adopted, generally, I am glad to say, without serious effect, though the poor patient is often greatly worried and harassed. If these artifices fail, the priest will sometimes manage in the very moment of death, when the dying man is in an unconscious state, to administer extreme unction and then declare that he died in the faith. In the same way immense sums of money have been stolen from their lawful heirs and turned into the treasury of the Church of Rome.

A man's worst foes are often members of his own household. I have known several young men whose home for a

time was a fiery furnace, and only the martyr spirit could have kept them faithful while passing through it. Many Roman Catholic parents, especially mothers, would rather see their children buried in the grave than in the baptismal waters of a Protestant church. In spite of the honest and vigorous efforts of the government to protect evangelicals and insure them perfect liberty in their religious work and worship, notorious cases of open persecution have now and then occurred.

A few years ago a Welsh missionary laboring in Sardinia was arrested and imprisoned for selling Bibles. Eight days he remained in a wretched village dungeon with only dry bread for food and little of that, with straw for his bed, and effectually cut off from all communication with the outside world. The mayor of this village is the brother of the parish priest, both of whom, however, suffered the penalties of the law.

In the early history of the work in Rome an attempt was made to destroy an entire congregation by blowing up the vestibule of the church at the close of the service. Providentially the fire did not take effect in time and the bomb did not burst till the people had all left the house and were safe in the streets.

In Marsala, a city of Sicily, with thirty thousand inhabitants, a native evangelist had been for some time preaching the gospel with more than usual success. This alarmed and enraged the priests, who often consulted together as to the best means of preventing the heresy from spreading further. Trusting to the weapon of force, the priests, gathering in a body, assailed the preaching hall, broke down the door, entered the room, took out the chairs, benches, and other movable furniture, and after piling them together in the middle of the street made a great bonfire and stood by looking on with deep satisfaction till the last particle was consumed, some of them probably hoping that it was only a

prophecy of the fate that awaited Protestantism and Protestants in their city and country.

One day while the Baptist pastor in Bari was away from home a begging friar presented himself to ask an alms. As the pastor's wife did not seem disposed to admit him into the house he threatened to enter by force, at the same time endeavoring to extort a contribution for the church. He compelled one of the little girls to kiss an image of the Madonna which he carried about with him. As he left the house he said with a significant shake of the head: "I understand who you are; I understand. I shall see what can be done." This same evangelist was once compelled to escape by a back window and flee through a dark alley to the open country in order to save himself from the wrath of a threatening mob. Finding it impossible to continue the public meetings without constant molestation and danger, he decided to hold them in a private house, hoping thus to escape observation and molestation. For a time all went well, and in spite of vague warnings the private meetings were continued without further interference. But all this time a secret conspiracy, originating with the parish priest, was developing. About thirty persons had agreed to surround the house at the hour of meeting, break down the door, and murder those who were assembled. But the hand of the Lord intervened and the brethren were saved. The house was assailed as had been agreed upon, but the mob had mistaken the day and hour of the meeting.

Shortly after this occurrence, the brother whose house was assailed wrote as follows to the evangelist:

Two days ago a great demonstration was made against the Protestants. About one o'clock I heard loud knocking at my door, and on looking out I saw a crowd of men, women, and boys, who were talking in a loud and threatening manner. Every word I uttered was drowned by their cries. Several persons attempted to break down the door and enter the house, declaring that they intended to kill the Protestants. With a long

knife and an axe I defended myself till the carabineers appeared, and thus saved myself from death. With great difficulty they succeeded in taking me to their barracks, where I would be safer than in my own house. It was generally acknowledged that the whole affair was the result of the fanaticism excited by the priests. The mob openly declared that they wanted to take the heretic from the hands of the soldiers in order to beat him to pieces. Do not come here again, as we are all in danger of losing our lives. Let us shake off the dust of our feet as a witness against the diabolical tendencies of this people.

Five days later the clerk of the court in a letter to the evangelist, said :

It was really a serious affair, and poor Prese (the writer of the above letter) was threatened with death. There can be no doubt but that he owes his life to his courage and to the intervention of the carabineers, who deserve great praise. The authorities are convinced that the whole affair is the result of hatred to the Protestants and to Prese, and not because of any evil deed. I give it as my opinion that this is an affair long since concocted in the confessional, and only waited a favorable opportunity to manifest itself. If these are the facts, the legitimate inference is that it is nothing less than the insane work of the priests to keep down and bring into disrepute the Protestants.

Several times our houses of worship in Naples have been assailed and considerable damage done, though no lives have been lost. A missionary once told me of an evangelist who escaped stoning by mounting a horse that happened to be near, and thus fleeing beyond the reach of his pursuers, who in their rage followed him to the banks of a neighboring river.

Some years ago an attempt was made to establish a mission in the town of Albano, about fifteen miles from Rome, picturesquely situated on the mountain side, near the site of the classic Alba Longa. At first several persons attended the meetings, and the prospect seemed promising. One man even renounced Romanism and embraced the evangelical faith. This aroused the envy and wrath of the priests, and they redoubled their efforts to suppress the heresy. Those

of the community who looked with favor upon the missionary and his work, were afraid to attend the meetings, knowing well the power of the priests to do them injury. The man who seemed to have the courage of his convictions soon found himself in great straits, for the priests managed to deprive him, not only of sympathy, but of every means of support, so that he was on the verge of starvation. His faith was too weak for the ordeal, and the occasion of his return to the Mother Church constituted a red-letter day in Albano, everything being done to impress and alarm the people. After some months of fruitless labor the mission was abandoned.

In the early history of the work in Southern Italy a systematic attempt was made to massacre an entire congregation. It happened in Barletta, a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, situated on the Adriatic Sea. The great mass of the people in Barletta are ignorant and superstitious, and much under the influence of the priests, and hence it was not difficult to excite their prejudices and hatred against the little Protestant congregation. Several times the authorities were notified that trouble was brewing, that the priests were inflaming and poisoning the minds of the ignorant people, but for some cause they remained inactive. The fatal spark was applied one night while the brethren were assembled in an "upper room," engaged in their simple service of song and Bible study. An infuriated mob surrounded the house, broke down the door, and actually killed several of those who were present. One man who escaped was pursued to the steps of a Catholic church, which he hoped would prove a safe refuge, but he was at once slain by the bloodthirsty mob. The room was fired, the Bibles, hymn books, and chairs being used as fuel.

The pastor saved his life by fleeing to the top of the house, which was flat, and as the houses are built one against the other, he managed to get some distance away. Finding a terrace door open, he fled into the room below and hid him-

self under the bed. Soon after a priest entered, and the poor, persecuted evangelist gave himself up for lost. After lifting his heart to God, he decided to crawl out from under the bed, confess his identity, and trust himself to the mercy of the priest. It was God's means of saving his life, for the priest, who had not favored or taken any part in the rioting, kept him concealed till the immediate danger was past, and then conveyed him safely out of the city. But for the speedy interference of the government authorities, the result of this open-handed massacre would have been much more serious.

A few years ago, while on a visit to Barletta, one of the members of our little church there confessed to me that he took an active part in that riot, having been taught by the priest that the extermination of the Protestants would be a work acceptable to God. "I was really sincere in all I did," he continued, "for I honestly believed that Protestants were infidels, and dangerous to the peace and welfare of the country." Several ringleaders of this revolution were afterward convicted and suffered the penalties of the law, a prominent priest being condemned to twenty years' hard labor. After all these years the spirit of persecution is still painfully alive in Barletta, the brethren and the evangelist being often insulted in the street. Dr. Taylor, writing of a late visit to Barletta, tells of how he himself was treated. While out alone for a walk in the streets he began to notice that he was attracting more than usual attention, and that a crowd seemed to be gathering about him. It was not long before he was quite surrounded, and but for the prompt interference of the police something serious might have happened. On returning to the house of the evangelist, he learned that he had been treated similarly and publicly insulted several times of late. All this is due to the systematic and persistent teaching of the priests.

An ex-priest of Southern Italy, who left the Church of Rome nearly twenty years ago, has been greatly persecuted.

A fellow-townsman of his assures me that the priests have manifested the spirit of the old-time Inquisition in their endeavors to bring him back to the fold. Finding that conversion was impossible, they tried to persuade the people to kill him, but they failed in this also. His fidelity and Christian character impressed the people, and it was his happy privilege to lead some of them to follow in his footsteps, and now more than half of the town, in theory at least, are with him. Lately the priests have tempted him with a very flattering offer, *i. e.*, to give him back pay from the time he left the church, if he would only return to them, but he replied: "No, though I am poor, I would rather live on a crust of bread as I am than to return to you and live in luxury."

Forty years ago persecution was the order of the day in Florence and several persons were imprisoned for the crime of reading God's word. Count Guicciardini, a man of ability and character, who had done much for his beloved Florence, was arrested while reading the Bible with a few of his friends, condemned to six months' imprisonment, and afterward exiled. Several persons who were found guilty of the same crime, some of whom are still living, were expelled from Tuscany.

Two humble Christians, Francesco Madiai and his wife Rosa, one a native Roman and the other a Florentine, suffered sharp persecution and a long imprisonment simply because they determined to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. They were scrupulously honest, generous, and charitable to the poor, ready to forgive every injury, loyal to their earthly sovereign, and devoted and faithful to the King of kings, a worthy example to all their neighbors and friends.

But all their good qualities did not avail to touch the heart or influence the judgment of their enemies. The single crime of apostasy from the faith of Rome was sufficient to render *nil* the value of any other consideration. Nineteen

months they remained in prison, cut off from their friends, and only once being allowed to see an evangelical minister. During their trial, when they attempted to defend themselves or their religion, the Catholic judge would cry out: "*Silence! You have no right to speak of your religion before a Roman Catholic audience.*"

Rome has always been afraid of those whom she has accused and brought to trial, and hence she has made every effort to silence her victims when in the presence of the public or else examined and condemned them in secret. Who can visit the famous Inquisition room in Rome and call to mind what has happened therein without feeling his blood curdling in his veins? There deeds were enacted to make devils rejoice and angels veil their faces. The secret trial and the silenced victim have ever been Rome's delight.

The groans and cries and spilt blood of these suffering ones appeal to God for vengeance, and it is the Lord, the Almighty One, who has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Remember the history of the Jews since the crucifixion and then you may have some idea of what God means when he says, "I will repay." "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou hast given them blood to drink." "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double."

The world long reeled under the fierceness of the wrath of the terrible and mighty Roman wild beast, whose thunderous roar has often rent the air, whose mad passion has caused the blood of saints to flow in torrents, whose cruel claws have dragged thousands into his dens of torture in dark Inquisition dungeons; and so horrible was the sacrifice of human life resulting from his rage that the world turned on him at last and bade him be still, bound and beat him into silence, drew his claws and his teeth, deprived him of dominion and the power to do further damage, and left him feeble and defenseless, albeit as fierce as ever.

Wherever Rome has had the power she has persecuted. Her history is written with blood. While her power has been greatly limited by the progress of events, facts prove that her spirit remains much the same. The spirit of persecution, so integral a part of her very being, is still alive and active, manifesting itself on every possible occasion. The Saviour said, "They will do these things, because they know not me nor my Father."

The spirit of persecution can be nothing less than the spirit of Satan, the great instigator of all evil, and yet this has always been, and is still, the spirit of Romanism. Even in free, liberty-loving America the same innate tendency is seen, and not a few examples might be cited if this were necessary. And yet notwithstanding all this, the patient, loving Saviour sends a tender message to those of his people who are found in Babylon, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Oh, that this voice might reach the heart of every Romanist who really loves the Lord and desires to do his will!

CHAPTER XIII

ROMANISM AND THE PULPIT

PREACHING is the heaven-ordained means of bringing men to a knowledge of the truth. But in Italy Romanism has largely changed God's order. Forms and ceremonies have taken the place of preaching, as they are easier for the priests and more acceptable to the natural man. It is not the design of Romanism to instruct the people or to give them the simple gospel truth.

Good Catholic preachers are very rare in Italy, for good preaching requires not only intelligence, but a knowledge of the Bible and, above all, pious living. But even when some exceptional priest is found who possesses these three qualities, he will soon find how impossible it is to preach gospel truth, pure and simple, and remain in the Church of Rome. Liberty of speech is denied him, and he must necessarily walk in the beaten track. His programme is prepared by others, and it requires him to preach the fundamental errors of Romanism. Should he refuse to do this he is forbidden access to every pulpit in the land.

I once heard a prominent priest preach several times in a theatre in Rome, the pope having forbidden him to preach in the churches. He had become too evangelical in his preaching and the church authorities were afraid of his influence. Besides he had published a book in which he frankly advised the church to abandon all idea of regaining the temporal power and instead to give attention to increasing her spiritual power by educating the people and by encouraging the study of the Bible. His book was placed on the "*Index*," as unfit for good Catholics.

Catholic preaching in Italy is comparatively rare and, as far as my experience goes, very unsatisfactory. Though I have made it a point to go often to Catholic churches, especially during Lent, their one preaching season, I have never yet heard a sermon in which the sinner was directed to Christ for salvation. A preacher in Naples in answering the question, "What must a man do to save his soul?" advised his hearers to go to confession regularly while they were young, and in old age commit themselves to the Virgin Mary. Another preacher in the same church made it his chief aim to impress the people with the fact that Christ was too holy to be approached directly by the sinner, and that therefore we must reach him through a mediator, *e. g.*, the priest or some saint. I once heard an English sermon in St. Peter's, and was struck with the fact that the speaker had much more to say of Mary than of Christ.

Another preacher in Rome was discussing the question of sin. His audience was large, attentive, and evidently from the better class. He spoke with considerable earnestness and said some very good things, but the only remedy for sin which he offered the people was confession to the priest and acts of penance. Not a word was said about the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin. Of course this great truth cannot be preached by the priests, for it would necessarily undermine and finally completely overthrow the great system of Romanism.

Several years ago I was spending the month of September in the little town of Penta, about thirty miles from Naples, back of Vesuvius. I was painfully impressed with the ignorance and the degraded condition of the peasantry. They seemed to me to be condemned to two-fold slavery, being in subjection to their landlord on the one hand and to their priest on the other. They impressed me as men who dared not call their bodies or their souls their own.

While in this village, one of the many festivals of the

Catholic Church took place, and the people were to have the privilege of hearing a preacher from the city. Wishing to hear and judge for myself, I joined the early worshipers, determined to miss no part of the service. The speaker was a very old man, scarcely able to ascend the steps of the high box pulpit. "Surely," I said to myself, "this old man, standing on the verge of the grave, knowing that his time is short and that he must soon render his final account, surely he will talk to the people in a simple, practical way, and give them the gospel."

Once in the pulpit, and having duly made the sign of the cross, he began in a monotonous tone to deliver his discourse. When he had finished I was painfully convinced that the people had received a stone instead of bread, and a serpent instead of a fish. Not one word did I hear that could bring peace to a troubled heart. The first part of his discourse was occupied with the political and ecclesiastical history of Rome, and the second part with the glories of Mary and her relation to salvation. He placed Mary, as the mother of God, on the highest pinnacle of the universe, without whom there could be no salvation.

As we came out of the church I was gratified to hear a young man remark to a friend at his side: "The preacher went too far to-day." I wondered if the old man truly believed what he said. I felt a strange desire to read his real thoughts, to penetrate the inmost recesses of his heart. Does he give the people chaff because he has nothing better to offer them? Is the light in him darkness? Has he so long preached the errors of Romanism, in spite of an occasional protest from his own conscience, that at last he has come to look upon them as truth? The answer to such questions the judgment day alone can give.

Some years ago I went frequently with pencil and notebook in hand to hear the most prominent Lent preacher of Rome. His fine presence, his musical voice, his rounded periods, his

apt illustrations, his impassioned utterances and occasional flights of oratory, drew a large number of attentive listeners to the church every morning for forty days.[1] In concluding one of his best sermons he spoke as follows:

> We are living in strange and troublous times. The enemies of religion are daily becoming more bold and blatant. Heresy is spreading, and even dares to show itself within the precincts of this holy city. Doubt and skepticism abound; one says this, another says that, and men have become confused and bewildered, not knowing what to believe. In such times we need a guide, sure, unfailing, infallible. Whither shall we look? In primitive times, while Christianity was still struggling for existence in the midst of the darkness of heathenism, a Christian was summoned before the courts to answer to the charge of blasphemy, he having said that Jesus was God. Knowing the heathen judge could not be convinced except by a miracle, and seeing a Christian mother standing near with a babe three months old in her arms, the accused asked the judge if he would be willing to accept the testimony of the little child concerning the character of Jesus. Without waiting to reply, the judge turned to the child and said: "Is Jesus God?" and to his amazement the babe replied, "Yes, Jesus is God." Then raising his voice, as if to frighten the child, the judge demanded, "Who told you so?" and the little one calmly replied, "My mother told me so, and God told my mother." Ah! dear friends, we need the unquestioning faith of that little child. We have a guide, a sure, an infallible guide in our spiritual mother, the Holy Catholic Church. Let us believe *what* she says, let us believe *all* that she says, and if necessary, *let us believe it blindly*.

Blind faith in the Church of Rome, such was the sum and substance of the teaching of those forty days. It is just this that has proved such a curse to Italy, and that has at last produced such a fearful reaction. It is not credulity, but intelligent faith that God desires. Truth does not fear the light, and the gospel invites investigation. What evades the searchlight can hardly be of God.

I heard the preacher just referred to several times and perhaps I could not do better than to give a few extracts from my note-book:

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[1] See Addenda, p. 281.

To-day the subject was: "The Catholic religion as distinguished from other religions." Much time was spent in proving the unity of the Catholic Church. Several times the speaker exclaimed, "What a wonderful spectacle, two hundred million souls believing the same thing, preaching the same thing, thinking the same thing, praying the same thing!" This unity and universality prove the superiority and divinity of the Catholic Church. "The Catholic Church," he exclaimed, "is altogether holy, thrice holy, as God himself. Hence it must be divine, and the only divine church." Mohammedanism, Paganism, and Protestantism were then brought into review, and in such a way as to make the contrast as great as possible.

His reasoning was plausible, but sophistical, and his conclusions were generally false and misleading. In preaching on the infallibility of the pope he said: "The church and the pope have never erred. If an angel from heaven should tell you something that does not agree with the word of the pope, let him be anathema, do not believe him, for he is not from God, but from the devil."

To-day the subject was Protestantism, and it was handled without gloves. After a brief introduction he asked: "How are we to know what is Scripture? The Bible itself does not tell us; Christ did not tell us; the apostles are silent; hence the church must decide. Here Protestantism is inconsistent, for they claim tradition on this point and disclaim it in other matters. Protestants are not agreed as to what is Scripture. Some admit one part and some another. Book after book has been denied a place in the canon, till, as some one has said, all the truth accepted universally by Protestants could be written on the thumb nail. Luther's translation is full of errors. He leaves out some books entirely, and makes no less than thirty changes in the text of Matthew alone. Protestants have mutilated the Bible, and hid the light of the truth."

The speaker had much to say of the evils of free thought, and to prove his point used only the worst examples found in Protestant countries. He claimed that it was impossible for a plain man to understand the Bible. The pastor must explain it, and the Protestant pastor puts in and leaves out just what he pleases.

Of Luther he could find nothing but evil to say: He deserted his church and religion. He mutilated the word of God. He taught error and falsehood. He even encouraged the people to be immoral, on the ground that the merits of

Christ are more than sufficient to save. He taught that good works were not only not necessary to salvation but actually injurious. He asserted that Luther was a very immoral man.

I was amazed to hear him declare that Protestants, as such, inculcate immoral principles, and that as a class, with the exception of a few country folk, they are immoral and live only for the flesh, having lost all spiritual sentiment. Every evil found in Protestant countries was attributed to the principles of Protestantism.

To show the evil effects of Protestantism in any land he gave a most vivid description of London, its population, its commerce, its immense wealth, its exceptional opportunities. He then pictured the life of the aristocratic and wealthy classes. He claimed that they live only for pleasure, the theatre, sumptuous dinners, the chase, gambling, and other similar occupations. "This is Protestantism!" he exclaimed. He then carried his hearers to the slums of London, and in vivid colors pictured the misery of the people. They are left in their wretchedness, neglected and uncared for by the rich.

This is the charity of Protestantism. The religion of these people consists in going to church on Sunday, abstaining from work, and possibly visiting some sick person. Protestantism is a gigantic evil. It has mutilated the Bible, corrupted the faith, rejected and hidden from the world the light of truth, destroyed the principle of love, hindered the progress of civilization and of the arts and sciences, and destroyed true Christianity. Therefore it is our duty to reject it. And yet they have dared to bring it to this holy city of Rome!

My blood boiled, and I could but exclaim: "Knave or fool!" The large audience was considerably excited, and the concluding remarks of the speaker did not make them less so. He drew quite graphically the scene of Hannibal's father leading him as a boy to the altar and making him swear eternal hatred to Rome. Then turning to the crucifix

that stood in one corner of the pulpit he exclaimed: "I call upon you to make a much better oath; I call upon you, O Romans, in the presence of this holy crucifix, I call upon you to swear eternal hatred to the Protestants." Then, after a brief pause, he added, "Not their persons, but hatred to their principles."

Having said this he turned his face toward the high altar and kneeled before the crucifix, almost the entire audience bowing at the same time. Great excitement prevailed. The audience was thrilled, including the writer. I could almost imagine myself living in the days of papal power, and about to be seized for heresy and led to prison or the stake. But the presence of Italian officers and policemen reminded me that papal authority was a thing of the past, and that liberal-minded, liberty-loving Humbert sat on the throne. I heard other sermons from the same speaker, but the foregoing will suffice.

Catholic preaching in Italy, whatever else it may be, certainly is not the exposition of Scripture. Sermons are mostly topical, suggested by the recurrence of some festival and setting forth the glories of some saint. I have heard several sermons on St. Joseph, whom the pope has raised to the dignity of universal protector of the church. One speaker used such expressions as the following:

My dear brethren, should I attempt to speak of all the virtues of St. Joseph, O my God, they are so numerous and so great that I should certainly lose myself in their number and their greatness. Hence I shall only speak of him as the father and protector of Jesus. . . This reflection puts St. Joseph at the head of every perfection ever proclaimed on earth or in heaven. . . This great sun of holiness, resplendent with glory. . . The holiness of Jesus himself appears only as a copy of the holiness of St. Joseph. . . Remember that St. Joseph was the protector of Jesus. He provided food and lodging for him, and supplied his daily needs. God made no extraordinary provision for him, but gave him St. Joseph as protector. And now what will he (Joseph) do for you? He will be to you another God. If Christ had

need of him how much more you? Think of his goodness, his prudence, his love, his delicate care of Christ, and surely he will be the same to you. After the Immaculate Mother of God, comes immediately St. Joseph on the throne of heaven.

The reader can judge for himself as to the effect of such preaching. I must believe that some priests desire the true well-being of the people, and in so far as they know, or are allowed, seek to lead them in the way of salvation; but as a rule Catholic preaching in Italy is so mixed with error, so sophistical and misleading, that great evil is the natural result, and the people remain fatally ignorant of the one great vital truth of Christianity. Their teachers have led the way, and they have followed blindly. Should thoroughly good preachers appear, thousands would hear them gladly; but I fear this can never be in Italy while the Church of Rome is in power, for every strong leaning toward evangelical truth is quickly and effectually nipped in the bud.

It is rather a significant fact that the one Catholic preacher in Italy to-day who has something of a national reputation, and who draws immense crowds wherever he goes, is unusually patriotic and evangelical in tone. When he preaches thousands hang upon his words with intense interest, and were it possible for him to proclaim the whole gospel, doubtless it would be like fresh water to many a thirsty soul, for among the people there are many who are weary and heavy laden, longing for peace and finding it not. But already his liberal and evangelical tendencies have been noticed, and he has been more than once checked and reproved, and warned to keep himself within the limits prescribed by the church. Once while preaching in Rome he dared to pray for King Humbert and the Italian army, but scarcely had the words fallen from his lips when the Vatican thundered a protest.

I do not know what the private sentiments of this preacher are, but judging from the general trend of his discourses, one can but feel that his severely orthodox sermons are of

the head and not of the heart, having been made and preached as a simple act of obedience to those in authority, and in conformity with the rules of the church. Under the present circumstances a truly great preacher in the Catholic Church in Italy would be an anomaly indeed. All the great preachers of Italy have sooner or later found themselves out of harmony and out of favor with the Church of Rome, and not a few have paid the penalty of their fidelity to truth and conscience with exile or death. Preachers there have been in Italy, great and true, but too often they have been hated and hounded.

CHAPTER XIV

ROMANISM AND THE POPE

THE true character and tendency of Romanism may be seen in its doctrine concerning the pope. The papacy was a gradual development, the result of human weakness and pride, and of the peculiar circumstances of the times. It required centuries for the papacy to reach its full growth. In the first century, when apostolic humility and simplicity were still prevalent in the churches, who could have imagined the condition of the Church of Rome one thousand years later? Had God allowed the abyss to open and the awful vision to manifest itself to the men of that day, surely wonder and fear and inexpressible grief would have taken possession of all hearts.

The names and titles assumed by the pope are very suggestive. He is called Pontifex Maximus, or High Priest, His Holiness, Our Lord, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Shepherd, Saviour, Most Holy Father. A bishop, addressing Julius II., during one of the sessions of the Lateran Council, said: "Thou art the Shepherd, thou art the Physician, thou art the Ruler, thou art the Husbandman, thou art, finally, another God on earth." Another bishop, preaching in the presence of Leo X., in 1513, said, in an apostrophe to the church: "But thou, O daughter of Zion, weep not, because behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David cometh; behold God hath raised up a savior for thee, who will preserve thee from the hands of those who seek to destroy thee. . . thou, O most blessed Leo, art the savior whom we expected."

"All the kings of the West reverence the pope as a God on earth," said Gregory II. Sismondi says: "The people

think of the pope as the one God that has power over all things in earth and in heaven." When Innocent X. was crowned, Cardinal Colonna said as follows, kneeling on his knees: "Most holy and blessed father! Head of the Church, ruler of the world, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, whom the angels in heaven revere, and the gates of hell fear, and all the world adores, we specially venerate, worship, and adore thee." Words of similar import were addressed to Leo XIII. on the occasion of his recent Episcopal jubilee. He was carried in lofty state on men's shoulders, beneath a canopy hung with fringe of gold, while thousands bowed the knee before him. The tiara, or triple crown, which the pope wears, symbolizes power on earth, in heaven, and in hell.

If other titles and prerogatives have not been assumed, one may naturally and justly conclude that it is only because there is none greater.

Cardinal Bellarmino, the great Catholic theologian, says:

God and the pope form one consistory. . . The pope can do almost everything which God does. The pope does what he likes, even things unlawful, and is more than God. If the pope should err by commanding vice and prohibiting virtue, the church would be bound to believe that vice is good and virtue evil, otherwise she would sin against conscience. (*Deus et papa faciunt unum consistorium. Papa potest quasi omnia facere, quae facit Deus. Papa facit quidquid libet etiam illicita, et est plusquam Deus. Se autem papa erraret præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona, et virtutes mala, nisi vellet contra conscientiam peccare.*)

The pope is not subject to the decisions of his predecessors, nor to the decisions of the apostles, being equally exempt from both, inasmuch as there does not exist any authority which can limit the power of the keys, not even the authority of Peter and Paul, as there is no superiority among equals. The pope can exempt one from the observance of the divine laws, and from the precepts of the gospel. . . It would be heresy to suppose that the pope could err in his decisions, and he who denies his supreme power is not a Christian. . . The pope as a man may err in the faith, though he has never yet erred, but he could never err as

pope. . . The pope can, in virtue of his absolute power, change the nature of things, and make something out of nothing. . . The pope is everything, and above everything. (*Papa est omnia, et super omnia.*) . . . The pope can change square things to round, and make white black, and black white. . . The pope is the cause of causes, and therefore the origin of his power ought not to be sought after, since there is no cause of first causes. No one can say to the pope, Why doest thou so? for his power alone is a reason for it, and he who doubts this doubts the Catholic faith. (*Papa est causa causarum; ideaque non est de ejus potestate inquirendum, cum primæ causæ nulla sit causa. Nemo potest dicere papæ: Cur ita facis? Sola enim potestas est pro causa, et qui de hoc dubitat dicitur dubitare de fide Catholica.*)

I once heard a preacher declare from the pulpit of the cathedral of Florence that there could be no salvation except by submission to the pope. This is the doctrine of Romanism with reference to the pope, and he who fails to accept it, not in part, but altogether, cannot properly call himself a Roman Catholic. And yet who now accepts the above in good faith? Certainly in Italy the proportion is very small. To one raised as the writer has been it seems incredible that any intelligent, thinking man could possibly accept the entire system of Romanism.

While traveling in Southern Italy, between Naples and Potenza, I found myself in a compartment alone with a gentleman, and in the course of a long conversation he used such expressions as the following: "Oh, what dreadful things the history of Rome recounts, especially the history of the popes. And yet this also is a part of human history. When I was in Rome I went to St. Paul's outside of the walls, and as I looked around at the busts of all the popes, I said to myself, those men represent every crime known to human history.

"Who believes in the priests to-day? About two or three in a hundred go to church because of real religious sentiment. Some go from habit; some to gratify their aged parents; many women go to the church because they want an excuse to leave the house, and can find no other. Take any girl to-

day of fifteen and ask her if she really believes in the priests and in their power to forgive sins, etc., and she will tell you no. By the middle of the next century the papacy and Roman Catholicism will cease to exist.

"There is hope of reform in any other government or kingdom, but not in the Roman Catholic Church. How can she reform? Reform means suicide, and she knows it too well. She is logical; she cannot change."

In the course of a debate in the Italian Parliament on the question of the papacy, one of the speakers said:

> Civilization stands forth and wishes to know in what department of its work the papacy has had a share! Is it the press? Is it science? Is it self-government? Is it the principle of nationality? Is it individuality? Is it liberty of conscience? Of all this the papacy is the negation. Its culminating points are Gregory I., who, like Omar, burnt libraries; Gregory the Great, who destroyed a moiety of Rome and created the temporal sovereignty; Innocent III., who founded the Inquisition; Boniface IX., who destroyed the last remains of municipal liberty in Rome; Pius VII., who did the same thing in Bologna; Alexander VI., who established the censorship of books; Paul III., who published the bull for the establishment of the Jesuits; Pius V., who covered Europe with burning funeral piles; Urban VIII., who tortured Galileo; Pius IX., who gave us the Syllabus and the dogma of papal infallibility.

The papal party in Italy is considered the implacable enemy of the country, and thousands of prominent men do not hesitate to declare it from the housetops. The task of Italian statesmen is by no means an easy one. They are compelled to fight the papacy and the priests, and yet most of them feel the necessity of doing it in such a way as not to make the impression that they are fighting religion. A gentleman once said to me: "Italy is really the most Protestant of all countries on the face of the earth, if by Protestant you mean one who protests against the absurdities and pretensions of the papacy."

A few days ago an ex-priest said to me: "At least ninety-five per cent. of the priests of Italy no longer believe in the

infallibility and the spiritual authority of the pope. Of course if you, as an outsider, and especially as an evangelical, were to speak to them about it, they would declare that they believed it all."

The dizzy height attained by the pope proved too much for human nature, and a reaction was a necessary consequence. By thousands of Italians the pope is now looked upon as nothing more or less than a political instrument in the hands of a political party. Though some of the people have confidence in the personal character of the present pope, Leo XIII., yet Italians have no confidence in the papacy as such, thousands longing to see the day of its utter destruction. Italy's experience with the papacy has been a sad one, and she is by no means willing to repeat it. At present the Jesuits are in power, and what they are intending to do no mortal man can foresee. It is generally believed that Leo XIII. can do nothing except at their bidding. Such being the case one cannot be surprised that the Italians are suspicious, for they have long since learned that the Jesuits are the very incarnation of ambition and hypocrisy. Italians have come to doubt the sincerity of everything that emanates from the Vatican, and late developments have not tended to change their feelings. Never have I heard the papacy so severely criticised and so bitterly denounced as in Rome and Italy. In his immortal poem Dante dared to put Boniface VIII. in hell; but to-day thousands of Italians would not hesitate to say that this is the fate of the great majority of the popes and some would even include them all.

The history of the papacy is the saddest and most inconsistent ever recorded. According to an Italian authority thirteen times two men claimed to be pope at the same time, each insisting on his divine right and authority and each sustained by a strong party. Not unfrequently a fierce contest ensued, bloody scenes were witnessed, and the successful candidate marched to the throne over the corpses of

his opponents, and with hands dyed in human blood ascended the altar where he was to be consecrated as the successor of the Apostle Peter and the Holy Vicar of Jesus Christ. This same author tells us that at one time even five men laid claim to this high and holy office. That my readers may see how this came about, and that they may read a portion of the history of the papacy as written by a cultivated Italian, I shall translate a few pages from the work of De Sanctis :[1]

The two popes, Leo VIII. and Benedict V., died about the same time, and the Romans, in accord with the emperor, elected the bishop of Narni, who took the name of John XIII. But at the death of this pope the chain of the pretended apostolic succession had another link broken. Benedict VI. succeeded John XIII., but shortly after, a deacon of the Roman Church, called Francone, one of the worst men of those times, strangled the new pope with his own hands, and did not scruple, says P. Maimburgo, to pass over the body of the Vicar of Jesus Christ in order to mount the throne of Saint Peter under the name of Boniface VII. and by means of such a detestable crime.

But the Tusculian counts, who desired a pope devoted to the interests of their party, drove out the Most Holy Boniface a month after his exaltation. Boniface fled to Constantinople, carrying with him all the treasures of the church of St. Peter, which were immense. Then another pope was elected, who died a few months after, and the Tusculian counts elected a member of their own family, who took the name of Benedict VII., Boniface VII. still acting as pope in Constantinople. As usual, the new pope excommunicated his rival, Boniface VII., who in turn excommunicated Benedict. Boniface, in order to reinstate himself, made a league with the Greeks and the Saracens, and induced Southern Italy to revolt.

In the battle which ensued, the emperor, who fought against the party of Boniface, was overcome, and shortly after died of a wound which he had received in the battle. Pope Benedict also died. The Tusculian party, however, hastened to elect another pope, who took the name of John XIV. Hearing of this, Boniface VII. left Constantinople and entered Rome in triumph. Pope John was arrested and shut up in the Castle of Saint Angelo, the dark home of many a poor prisoner, where he died of hunger. By order of Pope Boniface his body was indecently exposed to public gaze, and thus the monster who called himself most

1 "*Il Papa*," p. 160.

holy remained for a few months in peaceful possession of the papacy. At his death the Tusculian party took his corpse and, after having beaten it with rods and stabbed it with a dagger, they dragged it naked through the streets of Rome, leaving it finally under the great equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Capitol Square. After this some priests came and gave the body an honorable burial. Bishop Sigebert, speaking of this pope, the assassin of two other popes, says that Boniface was a horrible monster, who went beyond all men in meanness and wickedness.

Boniface being dead, John XV., the son of a priest named Leo, was elected pope. Crescentius, the son of Pope John X., by his well-known concubine Theodora, being consul of Rome, he shared the supreme authority with the pope, and thus they reigned together for ten years. At the death of John XV. the Emperor Otho III., being at that time in Italy, caused his nephew to be elected pope, who took the name of Gregory V., and in turn he crowned his uncle emperor. The new pope was only twenty-four years old. As soon as Otho left Rome, Crescentius drove out Pope Gregory and elected another, who took the name of John XVI. Gregory sent to his uncle for help, who came to Rome with a powerful army, and with the holy assistance of thirty thousand Germans compelled the Romans to accept his nephew as the true pope. The Romans, in order to secure the friendship of the victorious emperor, took the unfortunate Pope John, whom they themselves had elected, tore his eyes from their sockets, cut off his tongue and nose, and cast him into prison. Nilo, a well-known monk, had the courage to appear before the enraged emperor and to plead for the release of the wretched John. The emperor was moved by the tears of the old saint and was about to deliver the dying John into his hands, but the most holy Gregory, fearing that he would lose the opportunity of venting his priestly vengeance upon his rival, took him from prison, stripped off his clothes, and placed him, entirely naked, face backward, upon a camel, exposing him thus to the insults of the Roman populace. Cardinal S. Pier Damiani, narrating this tragic occurrence, adds a circumstance which shows how far the barbarity of a pope may go. He says that Pope Gregory commanded the ex-Pope John to sing an offensive song, which was dictated to him, and because he did not sing (they had already cut out his tongue) he was horribly beaten. As a result of such treatment John died, and Gregory remained the true successor of Saint Peter.

After the death of Pope Sergius V., in 1012, the Tusculian faction made another member of their family pope, who took the name of Benedict VIII., but the Romans, unable to suffer a pope who came from the hands of their enemies and feeling that the right of election was really theirs, elected Pope Gregory VI. War ensued, blood was shed, Bene-

dict was conquered, and only saved himself by flight. He took refuge with the recently elected emperor of Germany, and promised to crown him if he would re-establish him on the papal throne, which the emperor proceeded to do.

After the death of Benedict VIII., Alberic, one of the Tusculian party, bought the papal throne at a very high price for his brother John, who was called John XIX., or, as some say, John XX. Nine years later he died, and the same Alberic again bought the Papal See for another son, who became Benedict IX. Benedict was just twelve years old when he was elected the successor of Saint Peter, the most holy and infallible pope. Cardinal Baronius declares that he was eighteen years old, but however this may be, it is certain that he was one of the worst of all the holy men who have occupied the Roman See. A monk of those times, who afterward became Pope Victor III., calls Benedict IX. the successor of Simon Magus and not of Simon Peter. He says that his conduct was so depraved, his life so obscene, that he had not the courage to write an account of it. Nor is Cardinal Baronius, the great Catholic historian, more indulgent toward him. In spite of all this he is recognized as a genuine pope, and for five years was the peaceful possessor of the papal throne. But the Romans grew very weary of his manifold vices and drove him from the city. Benedict appealed to Conrad II. who was then in Italy with his German soldiers, and by force of arms he was reinstated. Puffed up with pride and feeling secure of his position, he became worse than ever. All were weary, says Pope Victor III., of the dissolute and infamous life of Pope Benedict, and his extortions and his murders, which he never ceased to commit. Finally it was decided to elect another pope. But the unbroken chain of apostolic succession? It is like the Arabian Phœnix.

The second time the Romans drove out Benedict IX. and unanimously elected Silvester III. Three months later, aided by his powerful relatives, Benedict again took possession of the throne, excommunicated Silvester, and continued his infamous conduct. But, foreseeing that he could not pursue this course very long without forfeiting his life, he deliberately sold the papal see to a priest, who became John XX. Benedict consecrated the new pope with his own hands, and then retired to his paternal home, where he still continued his evil life. However, he soon grew weary of private life, and taking up arms he besieged the Lateran Palace, drove out Pope John, and again occupied the throne. But the other two popes were still in Rome, so that, as an anonymous author of the history of the popes says, we see three of the most infamous men in the world at the same time wearing the pontifical robes in three of the principal churches of Rome—Benedict IX. in St. John's

Lateran, Silvester III. in St. Peter's, and John XX. in St. Mary's. These three holy men finally came to an understanding, each receiving an equal share of the papal income, and each leading an evil life. After this a holy priest, as he is called by P. Maimburgo, undertook to drive out the three popes, and this is the diplomatic way in which he managed the difficult undertaking. Knowing the infamous character of the three holy men (I give the very words of the Italian author from whom I am translating), he proposed that if they would renounce their rights in his favor he would give them in exchange as much money as they were receiving as popes, and that in addition they would be able to live a quiet and tranquil life. The offer was accepted, and the holy priest was elected and consecrated pope by the three popes, taking the name of Gregory VI. And thus there were four popes at the same time. But even this is not enough.

The Emperor Henry III. wished to put an end to such a scandal, and with this in view he started to Rome at the head of his army. Gregory VI. hoping to gain his favor, went to meet him, but the emperor insisted on his imperial right to elect the pope, or at least to give the final approval of the election. A council was called at Sutri, and Pope Gregory attended it, with the hope of being officially recognized by the emperor. He was given the presidency of the council, and all seemed favorable ; but one little circumstance blasted his hopes. The emperor read a letter to the council which he had received from a hermit, who enjoyed the reputation of being a holy man. In this letter the council was urged to depose all the four existing popes, and create another who would be the true pope. The hermit's advice was accepted and the four popes were declared deposed, and the emperor going to Rome drove them out and ordered the Romans to elect another. The Romans preferred to leave the choice to the emperor himself, and he selected one of his bishops, who took the name of Clement II. A few months later the unfortunate Clement was poisoned, and Benedict IX., by whose order the foul deed had been accomplished, for the fourth time took possession of the Roman See. The Romans rebelled, and asked the emperor for another pope, and he sent them a Bavarian bishop, who took the name of Damaso II. Benedict was then shut up in a monastery, where shortly after he died. Now who of these six popes, five of whom were living at the same time, was the true successor of St. Peter? Necessarily only one of them was. On this point, however, the catalogues of the Church of Rome are not at all agreed ; however, they are agreed on one point, viz : that *not* one alone of these was the true pope. Platina admits that Benedict IX., Clement II., and Damaso II. were true popes. Berti is of the same opinion. The anonymous author of the "History of

the Popes," a Roman Catholic, accepts four, Benedict IX., Gregory VI., Clement II., and Damaso II. What will the defenders of the unbroken apostolic succession say to this?

An abundance of similar matter could easily be furnished, but the above will suffice to give one an idea of the character of some of the popes. The "Nun of Kenmare," p. 416, does not hesitate to say that there have been "Popes whose lives were so awful, so evil, that even the very worst which Roman Catholic historians can say of Henry VIII. is as purity itself compared with their record." Such facts seem too dreadful to believe, and yet they are too well substantiated to admit of contradiction. The history of the papacy, I repeat, is the saddest and the most inconsistent ever recorded. After reading it one no longer wonders at the religious condition of Italy.

Surely but for the unfailing mercy of God and the innate power of the truth, a modicum of which has always remained in Romanism, true religion would have been banished from Italy, the last spark of heavenly fire would have been extinguished, and utter darkness would have settled down upon the people. But even in the darkest days God has always preserved a few faithful ones, who from time to time have held up the torch of truth in the midst of the surrounding darkness as a witness, and that all who really desire it may walk by its light.

In considering this question of the papacy it is not without significance that the last of the popes except one, though his whole life was spent in the blaze of the nineteenth century, was peculiarly intolerant, opposing with all his might the progress of the age, doing his utmost to keep the true light from shining into his dark and unhappy kingdom. The condition of Rome and the Papal States during the reign of Pius IX. is a suggestive commentary on the character and influence of the papacy. Dr. Alexander Maclaren, of Manchester, England, who visited Italy in 1865, says :

Next day saw us across the Tiber, and out of the oppressive death of the Papal States. We were once more in the atmosphere of hope. . . This is a different world from the dead city on the seven hills. There was no overawing foreign garrison here; no muttered words and side-long looks of hate; no dread of popular enthusiasm. . . And with this happy augury and sharp contrast to the repressed discontent and loathed sway of the paralyzing Roman yoke, began our bright impressions of Florence, the queen of Italy. The first thing that strikes a traveler from Rome in Florence is the contrast between the stagnation and repression of the one and the signs of progress and freedom which abound in the other.

Though a citizen of the nineteenth century, Pius IX. was not only intolerant, but spiritually proud and pretentious, perhaps above all others, though apparently sincere to the last. It was during his reign, and by his special desire, that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, making her equally divine with Christ, and Papal Infallibility became dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, rendering it impossible for any one to be a genuine Catholic who does not believe these doctrines, than which nothing can be more contrary to the spirit and teaching of God's word.

In the light of these facts, can we hope to reform Romanism? The councils and popes, more especially the Council of Trent and Pius IX., have bound the Church of Rome with bands of steel, and given her a momentum which it seems can only land her in complete ruin. Thousands in Italy, yes, I think it is perfectly safe to say that the large majority of thinking men, are convinced that the papacy can never be reformed, it being so thoroughly committed to a mistaken and evil course that it cannot draw back or turn aside.

Count Pianciani, in concluding the preface of his remarkable work, "The Rome of the Popes" ("*La Roma dei Papi*"), says:

The reader therefore will know Rome as the writer knows it, and like him will be nauseated by that hold of vice. Like the writer, convinced

of the vanity of hoping for reform, he will be persuaded that in order to correct the evils which the papacy has brought upon the Romans, upon Italy, and upon the entire human race, only one remedy is possible—DESTRUCTION.

But Romanism and the papacy are so interdependent, so essentially one, that it would be very natural to conclude that they must stand or fall together. There is a party in Italy who believe that the church can live and prosper without the pope, and that in seeking the destruction of the papacy they are not seeking the destruction of the church, but rather her liberation. Let the papacy cease to be, then there might be hope of reform. Who does not from his very heart desire a genuine reform in the Roman Catholic Church, with her millions of adherents in every land under the sun? One of two things must happen to Romanism—reform or ruin.

CHAPTER XV

ROMANISM AND THE PRIESTS

THERE was a time in Italy when the priesthood offered an honorable and lucrative career to thousands of young men. The clergy ruled the country. Cardinals, bishops, and even lesser ecclesiastical personages, lived like princes, dazzling and blinding the multitude with the splendor of their palaces and the greatness of their spiritual pretensions. In every family, from the highest to the lowest, it was considered honorable and desirable to have at least one son in the priesthood, and hence instead of a dearth the church was often embarrassed by a superfluity of priests. Many of these young men brought fortunes with them, more than sufficient for their own support through life. In those days the church in Italy was immensely rich, having in its possession the key of the national treasury, being the almoner of prince and peasant, and the depository of perennial streams of wealth pouring in from every land under the sun. What if there were thousands of priests whose services were not needed? there was wealth in abundance in the coffers of the church.

But a great change has taken place in Italy. The priesthood no longer offers such an honorable and lucrative career. The best families of the land no longer consider it a privilege to give their sons and their daughters to the church. Instead of unbounded wealth, even poverty and want are beginning to afflict the church, and the power and prestige of the priests are fast waning. They still seek after wealth and power as earnestly as ever, and in some cases they succeed in obtaining both; but this is now the exception, where once it was the rule.

Very few young men in Italy choose the priesthood of their own accord. I have often noticed in Rome that the young men in the theological schools are not from Italy, but from Germany, France, England, Ireland, and America. These young men come to Rome to imbibe the spirit of Romanism at the fountain-head, and if they succeed well, woe to the people who come under their influence.

Priests themselves tell me that nearly all of the Italian young men who are now preparing for the priesthood have been in training since they were little children, having had no choice in the matter themselves. Many of these are orphans, picked up here and there, not a few, I am told, being the children of priests.

The motives which lead parents to give their children to the priesthood are various. Some do it sincerely, believing that thus they can best serve God; others have a kind of superstitious feeling that to have a son in the priesthood will in some way bring temporal and spiritual blessings. Others have no higher motive than to give their sons a chance to earn a piece of bread. One young priest told me, and such cases are not rare, that he had been wearing the black gown since he was a child, because his mother felt that the family inheritance would not be sufficient for her two sons. He also informed me that with most of his friends who had chosen the priesthood for themselves, it was simply a last resort. After having tried everything else without success, with a grim grace they yielded to the inevitable, shaved the tops of their heads, put on their robes, took up their breviaries, and enrolled themselves among the parasites of the land. What wonder that there are great irregularities and much immorality among the priests, that the service they render is usually mechanical and heartless, that infidelity and hypocrisy are so common among them, that they are so seldom trusted and so often hated by the people!

I have yet to hear an Italian speak well of the priests as a

class. I have talked with many persons on the subject and invariably the verdict has been unfavorable. Even a priest himself told me that about one out of a hundred could be counted on as sincere and moral. Another priest, a theological student in Rome, told me that most of his fellow-students doffed their robes at night and became as young men of the world, not a few of them spending their time with those "whose feet go down to death, whose steps take hold on hell." I asked a gentleman once if it were true, as I had heard, that it was a common thing for a priest to have a concubine, and to my surprise he replied: "Certainly, it is true. How could it be otherwise? They are men like the rest of us, poor fellows." Most people in this country will readily admit that a truly virtuous priest, a genuine celibate, is a *rara avis*, whose notes are seldom heard.

The truth is, most of the priests are victims of very untoward circumstances, and either human nature or the Romish system must undergo a radical change before any worthy and permanent reform can be expected. Many young priests long to escape from their unnatural and unsought bondage, and would welcome release on almost any terms, provided they could be assured of the bare necessities of life. Recently an ex-priest came to my door seeking employment. He assured me that he was on the verge of starvation. "I can adapt myself to anything," he said. "I am willing to be a common servant, or even a street sweeper, if thereby I can earn an honest living. I shall never return to the priesthood, though I starve to death." Such cases are common and are becoming more common every year. It is said that a large number of cabmen in Paris are ex-priests.

I recall vividly a genial, attractive-looking young priest in a mountain town of Tuscany, who was so unhappy and discontented in his position that he could not hide the fact from the people. He often visited a shoemaker's shop where a

number of young men were employed to while away the time which hung heavily on his hands. One day while sitting among them he said with a sigh: "How I envy you all! Your time is your own and you can earn an honest, even if it is a modest, living. But I am only a slave and must spend my time deceiving the people, teaching what I do not believe, and basely playing the hypocrite every day." The chief man of the town, the uncle of the parish priest, urged him to doff his robes and flee to America, advice more easily given than taken. When last heard from he had simply been removed by the bishop to another town, with the caution to put a bridle on his tongue.

In the summer of 1892 I became well acquainted with the successor of this young priest, a handsome, intelligent young man of twenty-three. But though he had spent thirteen years in preparation for his position, I found that he was unhappy and discontented, and longed to throw off the shackles that bound him. Taking hold of his black gown one day he remarked with rather a bitter tone: "This is the most disreputable robe that one can wear. I am here because my mother wished it when I was only ten years old, and I accepted the situation, little knowing what I was doing or what was before me." We had many talks together, and I found him always restive and constantly hoping that something would turn up to make him a free man. Should he fail in his plans he will probably remain where he is and spend the rest of his days in trying to get the consent of his conscience in eating the bread of idleness and hypocrisy.

I once became quite intimate with a young priest in Rome who did not hesitate to say that the supreme desire of his heart was to throw off the shackles of the Romish priesthood. A prominent ex-priest once remarked in my hearing that if some millionaire were to endow an institution where priests could be received and cared for until they were prepared to earn their own living, not less than ten thousand would apply

within the first week. This tells a sad story, and is proof sufficient that a spirit of restlessness and discontent exists in many quarters. One great difficulty is, however, that after one has been trained from childhood for the priesthood, as a rule he is fit for nothing else, and once out of his native element he would find it most difficult to earn the bare necessities of life.

But the tables are turning, and the time does not seem far distant when necessity will force men out of the priesthood. Though the number is already greatly reduced, many are almost without employment and by no means strangers to the pangs of hunger. Last winter a young priest was arrested in Rome for theft. He confessed that he was starving and that he had been unable to resist the temptation to steal a loaf of bread. I have known of other similar cases.

Many priests in Italy have no regular parish and depend chiefly on saying masses for souls in purgatory, each mass bringing in on an average about fifty cents. These masses have greatly diminished in number of late, the dreadful superstition of purgatory being now almost a dead letter among the people. In the winter of 1891 the pope found it necessary to make a law excluding all priests not regularly and officially connected with the churches in Rome from saying masses in the city, as there were not even enough masses to meet the requirements of the regular priests. A most encouraging and hopeful fact indeed.

From my heart I pity the priests of Italy. How undesirable their situation, how dwarfed and emasculated their natures, how enslaved by circumstances, and in many cases how cheerless and hopeless their future for this life and for that which is to come! How can we expect them to be better than they are?

Who could blame one for confessing that when thinking of these things his heart has often involuntarily exclaimed, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not an Italian priest!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO

ITALY is full of shrines, places that lay claim to special sanctity, where wonderful miracles are reputed to be wrought, and where pilgrims are said to acquire special merit—part of the system by which Rome retains her influence. Some of them are only known in their immediate province, but others have acquired even an international reputation. Among the many that might be mentioned, none perhaps is better known than the so-called Holy House of Loreto, which for six hundred years has been an object of adoration in Italy and has proved a rich mine of gold for the church. It has been visited by millions of pilgrims, including kings and queens, popes and princes, and many other titled folk. A book of one hundred and eighteen pages, the thirty-fifth and last edition, published in 1890, a copy of which lies before me, gives minutely the history of the Holy House, its wonderful preservation in Nazareth, its miraculous translation by the hands of angels, the innumerable miracles with which it has blessed mankind, and the great spiritual grace and merits it has conferred upon its devotees. The author of this book says :

> From the lucky moment in which the Holy House of the Virgin Mary took up its abode among us a great fountain of wonderful miracles and of most exceptional graces was opened for the human race. Not a few heretics, Jews, and infidels have seen there a friendly, celestial light shine forth, which came down to enlighten the darkness of their infidelity. Here demoniacs have been delivered, the maimed have been made whole, the blind have received their sight, the sick have been healed, and sinners the most perverse and incorrigible have been brought to conversion.

Among the many persons of celebrity "who left their kingdoms and came in person in order to venerate this Holy House" the following may be mentioned: The emperor of Constantinople in 1406, Charles IV., with his wife and children, "who came to Italy to acknowledge the pope as the vicar of Jesus Christ," Frederick III., Charles V., Queen Mary, the sister of Philip IV., two queens of Hungary, Charlotte, queen of Cyprus, Queen Catherine, the queen of Poland, the queen of Sweden, the king of Turin, Ferdinand IV., king of Spain, the king of Naples, the king and queen of the two Sicilies, the king of Bavaria, the empress of Austria, and many others of royal blood, besides dukes and duchesses and other persons of rank in very great numbers.

This same book tells us of the several popes who came to venerate this Holy House, and to further enrich it with their apostolic benediction: Nicholas V., in 1419; Paul II., in 1450; Julius II., in 1508; Clement VII., Paul III., Clement VIII., Urban VII., Pius VI., Pius VII., Gregory XVI.; and on "May 13, 1857, Pius IX., accompanied by many cardinals, prelates, and his bodyguard. All of these, together with many who could not realize their pious desire to visit this house in person, enriched it with indulgences and gifts." Seven years of indulgence are granted to all who visit this house on Sunday, and plenary indulgence to all who visit it on Christmas Day or every day during holy week. Clement VII. granted seven years of indulgence to all who would devoutly crawl around the house on their knees. Clement VIII., more generous than his predecessors, granted plenary indulgence to all who would visit this sanctuary on any day during the year, and Clement X., Sept. 26, 1701, extended this indulgence to all souls in purgatory. Finally, Pius VII., on Dec. 10, 1806, granted to the custodians of the Holy House the power and authority to bless the crucifixes and medals brought by the pilgrims, and to grant one hundred

days of indulgence to all who brought these crucifixes, medals, rosaries, and other objects, and dropped them for a moment into the "holy cup" from which the infant Jesus was fed, and plenary indulgence to any inhabitant of Loreto who would confess and commune, and then visit the Holy House. This last Papal Bull was repeated on Aug. 20, 1815.

On reading such things one scarcely knows whether to laugh or to cry or to tremble with just indignation. And yet they form the larger part of the history of every shrine in Italy, these very things which appear so dreadful in the blazing and illuminating light of God's word, constituting the chief charm and glory of these so-called holy places. The people come to avail themselves of the indulgences granted by the popes, and to acquire merit before God, and the priests encourage them, because in this way their power and wealth are increased.

A few years ago this noted shrine was visited by James Jackson Jarves, an American art critic, who spent many years in Italy, and so interesting and faithful is his account that I cannot resist the temptation to transcribe a portion of it at this point, as found in his "Italian Rambles," page 120:

Descending the hill of Recanati toward the Adriatic for about three miles, we come to another, lower down, terminating in a gentle swell, on the summit of which is the stately church and outbuildings of the Madonna of Loreto. The town itself is a compactly built suburb of the sanctuary, of six thousand inhabitants, living on the traffic produced by the numerous pilgrims of all nations who frequent this shrine during the warm months. The main group of buildings, with the pontifical palace and its long portico, are imposing, and in the Bramante style of architecture. Especially noticeable for their artistic beauty are the bronze doors of the church and the fountain in the piazza in front, executed by the brothers Lombardi, Bernardini, and Vercelli, in the sixteenth century. Entering the church the central attraction is the beautiful marble case or covering in the form of a diminutive palace, covered with statues and *bas reliefs*, begun by Sansonino and terminated by Sangallo and the ablest architects and sculptors and bronzists of the sixteenth century of the classical Renaissance. It was made after the design of Bramante, at an

enormous expense. In itself it is a gem of art. But to the pilgrims its sole value is in its being the honorable shield or cover which protects the outer walls of the Casa Santa, or holy house, which was once the residence of the Virgin Mary at Nazareth, in Palestine. It consists of a single room of rude masonry, about fifteen feet long by twelve wide, the flat stones, bricks, or pieces of marble being laid in three courses a foot and a half thick, with considerable intervening mortar. A little book purporting to be the authentic history of the holy house, as sanctioned by the Roman Church, is sold to visitors, and from it I take the following brief statement:

"In this simple apartment the Virgin lived with Jesus until he grew to manhood and departed on his mission. After the crucifixion she remained in it until her death, frequently visited by the apostles and other disciples of Jesus. When Nazareth was pillaged by the soldiers of Vespasian, the house of Mary was miraculously preserved. They could not enter the lane where it was situated or touch its walls, which God preserved to make one day an object of worship for all Christians." So the book states.

After this time it became a center of pilgrimage for the faithful everywhere. St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, found it intact in the ruins of the town, "unsullied by the worship of idols." She was not disposed to trust it longer solely to miraculous care, so she surrounded it with massive walls and iron railings, in the form of a magnificent catacomb or temple. In this state it remained an object of devotion to the Christian world until Palestine was overrun by the Saracens and the edifice of St. Helena destroyed by them. This was A. D. 1291. The Almighty again directly interfered to preserve it. By the hands of his angels he detached it from its foundations, "which remain to-day to attest the fact," and carried it on their shoulders across the seas to Dalmatia, depositing it on a hill near the coast called Raunizza.

Not trusting wholly to description to make this miracle sensible to the pious readers, the author gives a picture of the scene as witnessed by many spectators at the moment of its aërial voyage. The Madonna, holding the infant Jesus in her arms, is seated on the sharp pitch of the roof, while boy and adult angels are lifting and escorting the stone cabin, in a blaze of celestial light, in its rapid flight over land and sea. Naturally the peasants are astonished to see a building in the "form of a church with a tower and two bells on the roof hanging over their heads with no support of foundation or floor." In the interior they saw an altar with a crucifix painted on cloth attached to a cedar plank, and a statue, also of cedar, of the blessed Virgin and her Son, with their hair and clothes fashioned in the style of Nazareth, and an old dilapidated wardrobe. "A

miracle was evident, but it was an enigma for all," until the Virgin herself, in a vision to the curé of the neighborhood, explained the "great secret." "The house was that in which she was born, lived, was saluted by the angel, conceived of the Divine Word, and where she nursed and raised the infant God."

The skeptics of the time, however, like Thomas, demanded more evidence, consequently a deputation was sent to Nazareth, where they found the ruins still fresh of the edifice constructed by St. Helena, which had of themselves miraculously opened to give passage to the holy house, the foundations of which being measured, and the materials examined, were found to agree with those of the building transported by the angels to Dalmatia. They made a legal attestation of these facts, and deposited them in the archives of Nazareth. "After this no one dared to deny the authenticity of the miracle," if we may still believe the historian.

The Dalmatians gave a cordial welcome to the Casa Salynta, devout worshiped it, provided for its preservation and the comfort of the pilgrims it attracted, and were prospering greatly in their worldly estates, when to their intense chagrin and monetary loss, after a stay of only three years and seven months, without warning or reason, it flew over the sea and lodged itself in a grove of laurels, two miles from the coast, near its present site. The bereaved inhabitants took such comfort as they could get in putting up the following brief inscription in its place: "The Holy House of the Virgin came to Tersatto May 10, 1291, and left December 10, 1294," without further comment. In their prayers, however, they were wont, for a long period, to ejaculate in tears: "Return to us, O beautiful lady; come back to us, O Mary, with your house." But it would not come.

In its new locality the Virgin appeared again in dreams to various pious individuals to attest the authenticity of the building and the genuineness of the miracle. But it would appear that in its hasty flight and lighting, it had not sufficiently considered the character of the neighborhood. There were no accommodations for the devout pilgrims, or food. The richest and most delicate visitors had to sleep on the bare earth and subsist as they best might. There were no roads, and to make matters worse, "the prince of darkness, jealous of the holy house, sent bands of robbers to spoil and kill its visitors," to a degree that soon put a stop to them, and it was left quite alone in the society of thieves and murderers.

Being of a social as well as moral disposition, the house after an eight months' trial of its new home, rose again in the air, and planted itself a little more inland in a verdant hill near Recanati. The owners of this site were two brothers, who were greatly pleased at an event which gave so much additional value to their estate. Pilgrims came again by thou-

sands, bringing gifts, greatly to their benefit. At the sight of so much riches flowing to them, they became very avaricious and quarreled over the division, nigh unto killing each other. "The Most High," I quote literally, "irritated at this fraternal discord, suddenly withdrew the house of his divine mother and transferred it to another charming hill, near-by, where it still remains," much to the edification and benefit of the people who make up the motley population of Loreto.

I did not see the old wardrobe of the Virgin, perhaps because it was too much encased in jewels, but I was shown a little earthen porringer, or bowl, encased in solid gold, beautifully wrought in relief, out of which the little Jesus was accustomed to be fed when weaned. I also saw the black, ugly image of the Madonna and Bambino carved by St. Luke,—his being a sculptor as well as painter was new to me,—or as much of it as the intense blaze of diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, in which it was literally encased, would admit; the biggest diamond being the gift of the sainted Antonelli, and a glorious sight it was for a lover of precious stones, or a lady of fashion, barring the covetous feelings they might incite in their misplaced position.

These treasures are the accumulated gifts of the present century only, the French in the last having made a clean sweep of precious gifts of royal personages and the devout, wealthy pilgrims, to the amount of many millions of dollars. So rapidly, however, do they accumulate that even in our unbelieving time, since 1792, the vast hall or chapel of the treasure has been refilled with precious gifts,—largely jewelry,—but by no means of equal value to the former gifts of which it had been despoiled in the preceding century.

The Casa Santa is also very richly endowed in lands, and I was greatly pleased to see a notice put up on one of its well cultivated vineyards that it had received the premium for this branch of its industry. It certainly is of a more Christian character, according to the nineteenth century ideas, than vending such mendacious histories of the holy house as the one from which I have quoted, and turning the simple piety of the uneducated masses into a gainful superstition for the priesthood.

The greatest Catholic potentates and highest prelates, both of Europe and America, give their sanction by visits, gifts, and devotion to the stupidly contrived tale which brings so much wealth to this shrine and makes it a fertile nursery of an imbecile kind of devotion destructive to real religion. Millions of lips have kissed and licked in spots the rough surfaces of the interior stone wall of the house, until they are as smooth and glistening as plate glass; millions also have kissed and licked the bronze figure in relief of the scourged Christ on one of the doors, until it is all worn down to a thin, shapeless outline; millions of bare knees

in making the circuit of the marble foundations of the outer walls in penance, have worn deep channels in the stone, and it is said that many pilgrims go up the long hill that leads to the church on their knees, kissing and licking the earth and stones as they drag themselves slowly onward.

The crowds are taught to believe that the Casa Santa miraculously converts heretics and Jews; that it cures diseases, saves sinners; that it stops earthquakes, epidemics, wars; that Mary of Loreto always grants the petitions of her worshipers here, and that the district of Piceno under auspicious protection, is proof against all dangers and disasters; and this they believe, though a few years since, in sight of the shrine, General Cialdini defeated the papal forces under General Lamoriciere and won the Marches and Loreto itself for the hated kingdom of Italy. Since these events there has been improvement even here—more cleanliness, fewer beggars, no brigands, and the opportunity of wholesome progress. Nevertheless, Italians say, the nearer you get to the great sanctuary the worse is the blasphemy in which so many Italians are adepts, the more cheating and pilfering, and they give the neighborhood a bad name, calling it a gospel shop, where religion is made a mere traffic. Personally I noticed nothing specially reprehensible or differing from Catholic shrines generally.

In the figure of an aged servant of the church, in the uniform of an invalid soldier, on guard at the door of the holy house, with a diminutive drawn cutlass, presenting arms to every priestly visitor in a very solemn manner, while punching or shoving aside the poor ones, there was a touch of the ridiculous. He was so weak in every joint, and so unwarlike in every gesture, and had such a piteous, not felonious but fee-pleading look, that he interested me far more than St. Luke's Virgin and her diamonds or the earthern porringer. If they would only write him down in the veritable history as the Blessed Virgin's old family servant, miraculously preserved with the house, millions would swallow this statement as readily as the other.

In the spring of 1892 I visited Loreto and saw for myself this noted shrine and the degrading form of pagan worship practised there. I reached the station at midnight, and found a little one-horse carriage waiting to carry three of us up the long, steep hill to the town. Partly because it was cold and partly out of sympathy for the poor horse, I preferred to walk most of the way with the driver, meantime getting what information I could out of him.

He informed me that living was very dear in Loreto, chiefly because of the heavy duty which the little town puts on everything, especially the necessaries of life. In Italy, all country produce which is carried into the city is very heavily taxed. On reaching the unpretending little inn, we had to call the hostess out of bed, and when she appeared she very innocently asked if we all three wanted the same room. I might have saved ten cents by the operation, but I preferred the extra expense and a room to myself. My room was on one of the principal squares of the town, and early in the morning I was half-awakened by the conversation of hundreds of peasants who had gathered from the country. Later not a sound was to be heard, and on inquiry I learned that they had gone in a body to mass and confession.

At breakfast the waiter informed me that he was only temporarily in his present place, his real profession being custodian of the Holy House. The young man manifested quite a friendship for me before I had finished my breakfast, and he expressed himself as entirely willing to leave his dining room and dishes and spend a couple of hours in my pleasant company if thereby he could enable me the better to see and appreciate the wonders of the Holy House. When we came to separate I had to double the fee which I at first offered him in order to satisfy the demands of his friendship.

The day after my arrival in Loreto was Palm Sunday, and hence I found a great crowd, mostly peasants from the surrounding country. Many of these are hearty, fine-looking people. Very few are able to read or write, which is usually the case in the neighborhood of these noted shrines. I witnessed the blessing of the palms by the bishop. Scores of bright, hearty-looking children gathered in the cathedral, each carrying a large bunch of olive branches, and while the aged bishop, so feeble that he could scarcely stand, was submitting publicly to the process of being clothed in his official

robes these happy, mischievous children were talking and laughing and playing tricks on each other, each trying to secure the best possible place, so as to be sure of a goodly share of the bishop's blessing.

At the moment that the aged bishop, standing at least one hundred feet away from the children, raised his feeble hands to sprinkle the holy water toward them, every drop of which fell at the old man's feet, each child stood on tiptoe with his bunch of olive branches raised high above his head, apparently supposing that some special virtue would be infused into that branch which stood the highest. For weeks the children had been looking forward to this performance, and when it was over they seemed to feel at liberty to make as much noise as possible, talking, laughing, quarreling, jostling each other, and in the confusion some stealing olive branches from the others. I inquired what the children did with these olive branches which had received the bishop's blessing, and I was told that they place them in their houses to keep off diseases and evils of all kinds, and in the fields to prevent hail, drought, and other disasters, and to secure a good harvest.

Poor people! How cruel and blameworthy in those who know better, to teach them such things! And yet it is common all over Italy. I said to myself, and I felt like proclaiming it from the housetops of Loreto: "Surely this is paganism, and those who encourage it are far worse than the pagans themselves." Perhaps not one in all this crowd has a Bible, and should I distribute a few the fanatical, pleasure-loving priests of this place would probably scent them in a very short time and condemn them to the flames, at the same time imposing upon the unhappy possessors of such a book some disagreeable penance and a handsome contribution for the support of the Holy House.

On entering the Holy House I found it well filled with pilgrims, all repeating their prayers before a great image of

the Virgin, which image, it is said, came along with the house when it was brought by the angels from Palestine. How preposterous to claim that God commissioned the angels to bring this image to Italy as an object of adoration for the people, when he has strictly forbidden the making of images and the bowing down before them. But as the second commandment is banished from the catechism and from Catholic theology in this country, the people generally know nothing of this important fact, and hence the bowing before images is universal.

I found the floor and the walls worn smooth by the knees and the lips of the pilgrims. I was shown the fireplace, which lays claim to special sanctity. Two persons, a woman and a little girl, were kneeling in it, repeating their prayers, others standing by patiently awaiting their turn. I noticed that they were resting their elbows on a large contribution box which filled the width of the fireplace. Of course it is understood that all money dropped into that box receives a special blessing and confers the same upon him who gives it.

I saw also the little bowl out of which it is said the infant Jesus was fed. The priest who exhibited it told me to drop into it any object I wished to have blessed and I would be entitled to one hundred days of indulgence. A peasant woman who stood just behind me on hearing this uttered an exclamation of surprise, and at once came forward and dropped her rosary into the bowl, others crowding around anxious to avail themselves of this rare opportunity, as the precious miracle-working bowl is only occasionally exposed to view. One man even dropped in his watch, hoping perhaps that it would keep better time. The same priest presented the bowl to my lips to be kissed, which took me considerably by surprise. I excused myself, however, telling him that I only wished to see it, not feeling it prudent to say more just at that moment. All who stood about me kissed it and received the priest's blessing, which was given in the most indifferent, perfunctory manner possible.

The poor peasants seemed sincere and in earnest, but I must confess that I could not discover the least trace of seriousness in the manner or expression of the handsome, well-fed priest. Very likely he had no faith whatever in the authenticity or sanctity of these things, willing, however, to act his part, because thereby he procured a good living.

In this small town of six thousand inhabitants there are twenty-six priests and fifty nuns, supported, of course, by the pilgrims who visit this shrine. I have noticed that at these special shrines the priests seem thoroughly satisfied with high living and low thinking, most of them having settled down into a purely material, mechanical life. After some experience with such places one cannot wonder that the "high places" and the "green groves" of the ancients became hot-beds of superstition and vice. After having been to Loreto I thought of the famous saying of Pope Leo X. And yet such shams, with their attendant evils, are being gradually introduced even into America.

"The Examiner," of New York, June 9, 1892, contains the following:

> It is startling to find the lowest forms of Romanist superstition cropping out in our own enlightened and, as we like to think, highly advanced city. For several weeks past throngs of people have been flocking to a little Catholic church on the East Side to look at a fragment of bone which is there exhibited as having originally belonged to the arm of Saint Ann, mother of the Virgin Mary. The faithful are urged by the priests to improve the opportunity offered them for a brief space—for the relic is here only temporarily—to gaze upon the wrist of "the grandmother of God." Many cures are declared to have been wrought by the object described in these inconceivable terms. This doesn't look as if Romanism were as much affected by American influences as is sometimes claimed.

But is it not a proof of the inevitable tendency of Romanism? Surely we need wisdom and courage in dealing with such a system, which claims to be pre-eminently divine and yet is fraught with such fearful evil.

Many believe that Romanism in America is radically different from Romanism in Europe. But is it so? In the very nature of the case there is less of ignorance and superstition and blind faith; but as long as mass and confession and priestly absolution and the value of human merit are taught and believed, surely we cannot call the change a radical one. Recently I had a letter from a prominent pastor on the Continent, and he says:

> I have just been over in the States for five or six months. They are in great need of such a book as the one you are preparing. They are quite mistaken as to Roman Catholicism. They all told me that it is much improved in America, not at all the same thing as in Europe. The Bible is read, people believe in Christ chiefly, etc. They forget what the Master said: "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." The roots are the same old roots and will give the same sour and bitter and poisonous fruit.

I fear this witness is true. The tap-root of Romanism remains as it was and where it was from the beginning. Are not the most subtle and dangerous errors of Romanism fundamental, an essential part of the very system itself, quite out of harmony with much New Testament truth, and subversive of the one great central doctrine proclaimed by Christ and the apostles?

CHAPTER XVII

APPARENT VICTORY, BUT REAL DEFEAT

THE Roman Catholic Church has had a marvelous career, a career calculated to make both men and angels wonder and weep. From humble beginnings she gradually became the most complete and powerful organization on earth. Her aim was, and is even at this moment, universal dominion, both political and religious; and there have been times when she seemed about to realize her proud design. But with all her boasted wisdom and her high claim to infallibility, the Church of Rome has often blundered egregiously. Many a time has she been forced to adopt the words of the jealous, persecuting King Saul: "I have played the fool and erred exceedingly." Many a time, when she was proclaiming to the world her greatness, and boasting of her supreme power and divine attributes, she was at that moment standing on the verge of defeat and humiliation. Like Nebuchadnezzar she has found that he who exalteth himself shall be abased.

Apparent but short-lived victory has often proved real and permanent defeat. More than once in the history of Romanism victory has been the cause and the occasion of defeat. A very striking example of this fact is found in the early part of the sixteenth century.

In the great Lateran Council it had been publicly declared that all opposition had been put down, that the mouth of every enemy had been stopped, that heresy and heretics had been exterminated. No mention was made and no account was taken of the diabolical measures adopted to bring about this long-desired result—the injustice, the persecution, the

torture, the bloodshed. Having once accepted the principle that the end justifies the means, such things were counted eminently proper, if by so doing the interests of the church were advanced, and the purposes of the papal party were accomplished. They congratulated themselves on their success. By long and bloody persecutions they had succeeded in silencing the faithful witnesses of Christ, in wearing out the saints of the Most High.

Rome, however, was short-sighted, and failed to discover that the very steps by which she had reached her dizzy height would prove her ruin. Though she knew it not, already silent but mighty forces were at work, destined to shake the very foundations of her kingdom. Three years later, in 1517, Martin Luther appeared on the scene, and every one knows the result. Romanism received a blow from which it can never recover. While still flushed with victory, defeat overtook her. The very foundations were shaken, and some even supposed that the entire superstructure was about to tumble into ruin.

So great and so sudden was the change that all the world stood amazed. When she was most secure and most elated with selfish pride, then appeared the mighty champion of the truth, who sent fear and consternation throughout the camp, causing even the pope himself to tremble on his throne. Those telling blows are felt to this day, nor can the Church of Rome ever return to the position she occupied before they were given. As a result, no man on earth is more hated and villified by Romanists in Italy than Martin Luther, whom they call the son of the devil. It is claimed and believed by many that the devil took the form of a man in order to beget a son in his own likeness, who would be able to accomplish his purposes. An intelligent ex-priest told me there was a time when he actually believed this story.

Roman Catholics have never forgiven Luther. One of them said to a friend of mine in America, "There is no

place in hell deep enough for Martin Luther, because he broke up the unity of the true Church."

When has the world ever produced just such a man as Pius IX.—enthusiastic, devout, and apparently sincere, and yet the author of the most blasphemous dogmas ever promulgated? His was a long and prosperous reign, ending, however, in a most ignominious defeat. Who can forget the year 1870, when Pius IX. called together cardinals and bishops from all quarters of the globe, and kept them eight months in the Eternal City to consider and decide upon that great question of the ages, Papal Infallibility. For several years the pope had been making his plans and preparing his material for this great meeting, for he had determined beforehand that he must succeed, that his infallibility must become a dogma of the Church of Rome, and with pride and pomp be proclaimed to the whole world. He succeeded. Dazed by the dizzy height to which he had climbed, he ordered the fearful doctrine promulgated throughout the world, thus binding every Catholic to the acceptance of the same.

But this victory became the cause and occasion of a most humiliating defeat. The best men in the church turned against him, and a strong opposition party was formed. A few days later war was declared between France and Germany, and the French soldiers who had long protected the pope, and upheld him in power, were recalled from Rome. The eagle-eyed Garibaldi, who had long waited for this opportunity, at once sounded the tocsin of war, and raised the cry, "On to Rome," and on Sept. 20, 1870, just two months and two days after the great victory of the pope, Rome was captured by the Italian army. Victor Emmanuel was declared king by the free, unanimous vote of Roman citizens, only fifty voting for the pope.

Pius IX. shut himself up in the Vatican, the temporal power passed forever away, and the infallible pope spent the remainder of his life in self-imposed imprisonment, bewailing

his sad condition and hurling anathemas against those whom he once called his own dear children, but whom he now considered his worst enemies. To the very last the poor old man persisted in calling himself a prisoner, and in cherishing the vain hope that Rome and the Papal States would again be his, and that like Job his latter end would be more prosperous than his beginning. How utterly he failed to read the signs of the times! Surely it proved true in his case that, "Whom the gods would destroy they first dement." While arranging for the great council, and all at his own personal expense, little did Pius IX. imagine what he was preparing for himself and for the Church of Rome. A few years later he died, and at his funeral the people could scarcely be restrained from seizing his body and casting it into the Tiber. And yet a few years before all Rome trembled at his word, and bowed the knee when he passed. Oh, the irony of fate!

It is a well known fact that the papal authorities in Italy have continued to this day to insist upon the restoration of the pope's temporal power as a divine right. They claim that until this is accomplished the pope must remain a prisoner, humiliated before the world and incapacitated for the full performance of the sacred duties of his high office.

Only a few weeks ago I bought a book in Rome, published in 1891, and entitled, "On the Temporal Dominion of the Popes. Who is Right, the King or the Pope?" This book contains one hundred and ten pages, and on nearly every page the temporal dominion is insisted on as a divine right and essential to the prosperity and success of the church. Everything has been done to accomplish this purpose. With strange infatuation, and utterly blind to the signs of the times, the Church of Rome has steadily pursued her course in Italy, never yielding one iota of her preposterous claims, incapable of profiting by the experience of the past and the changed circumstances of the present, hoping for victory, but day by day paving the way for defeat.

Italians will not soon forget what happened in Rome in September of 1894. A great international pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican had been carefully organized, the object being to enlist the sympathies of the nations in behalf of the pope, with special reference to the restoration of his temporal power. For years the question had been kept constantly before the public, Catholic authors, editors, preachers, politicians, and others, lending their aid; but now, supposing the propitious moment had arrived, it was proposed to give a master stroke in the form of this great international pilgrimage. Already the pilgrims had begun to pour into Rome by the thousand, these, however, being only the advance guard of the great army which was to follow. The pope's heart rejoiced at this renewed evidence of Catholic zeal and filial affection, and the papal authorities began to hope that the hour of triumph had finally arrived.

The pilgrims were welcomed by the Romans, partly because they brought large sums of money to the city, and partly because they believed that a visit to Rome and the Vatican would be an eye-opener to many a poor pilgrim. An Italian writer exclaims:

> Come, then, O pilgrims, whose minds are full of strange prejudices, who sincerely believe that the church is in a state of slavery; come to Rome, the inviolable capital of Italy, and open your eyes. If the pope desires to see you in great numbers bowing at his feet, Italians have no objection to admiring your processions. Do not be afraid. When you leave the station walk tranquilly about the streets of old Rome and of new Rome, visit the churches and monuments, attend all the religious services, and even the patriotic commemorations—not a hair of your head will be touched, not an unpleasant act performed. No one will be lacking in courtesy and hospitality. More than this, the Italian government will see to it that you are permitted to perform all the duties of your pilgrimage devoutly and safely. The Pope, your Lord and King, has wished to give special importance to this pilgrimage, and he has done well. Now you will be able to see for yourselves, and once within his rooms, too small to contain their Oriental luxury, you will be horrified at the miserable spectacle of his poverty. Ah, do not take away a

single whisp of the straw on which he is lying, lest his pallet become even harder than at present. Make him a soft pillow with your money, and he will certainly recompense you with wise and sacred words. Come to Rome, O pilgrims, come; and when you return to your respective countries, you can tell your friends that when the temporal power passed away Rome did not fall, but rather like a woman loosed from her chains and liberated from slavery, she came forth more beautiful and attractive than before; tell them that the capital of Italy is a place where one may come without meeting persecution or even annoyances, where one may freely venerate the head of the church, or admire the monument to Giordano Bruno; tell them that happening to be in Rome on September 20, a day sad and painful to His Holiness, but glorious for Italy and humanity, you saw the great national festival celebrated with solemnity and perfect order; and finally, tell them that the Vatican throughout is a beautiful prison, without bolts or bars to hinder any one from leaving it, and that now you understand perfectly why the Pope remains where he is. Come to Rome, O pilgrims, come.

The kindly manner in which the pilgrims were received, the good order which prevailed everywhere, and the apparent good-will that was manifested for them, proved a means of deception to many, and created high hopes of victory. Alas for human calculations!

Three French pilgrims, while in the Pantheon, dared to insult the tomb of Victor Emmanuel, the father of his country, the idol of united Italy. It was the spark destined to produce a mighty conflagration, which threatened to consume those who had set it going. As a Roman journal stated, it needed neither newspaper nor telephone to spread the news throughout the city. From house to house, from family to family, from conscience to conscience it flew on the wings of the wind, and within a few hours the whole city was in an uproar; improvised processions were marching through the streets crying out: "Long live Italy and Victor Emmanuel!" "Down with the Vatican and the pope!" The national flag was unfurled from thousands of windows, and the pilgrims were hissed and insulted on every side, and forced to hide themselves from this sudden outburst of patriotic

enthusiasm and fury. Before the close of the following day all Italy was sharing the indignation and the enthusiasm of Rome, everywhere the cry being the same: "Long live Italy and Victor Emmanuel!" "Down with the Vatican and the pope!" and not a few adding, "Death to the priests!"

What means all this? Another defeat in the moment of apparent victory. How little did the Roman Curia expect such a turn of affairs! And yet it was just what might have been looked for had they not willfully shut their eyes to the real situation.

In view of these facts and of others that might be cited, one is reminded of the words of a writer in the "Edinburgh Review" of 1846, in speaking of the exposition of the "Holy Coat of Treves":

> Upon the whole, the experiment of Bishop Arnoldi, under all the circumstances of the case, would appear to be little short of infatuation. Where, we are ready to ask, was that astute spirit, that profoundly subtle policy, which is not unjustly attributed to the Romish Church, and by which she is supposed to read sagaciously the signs of the times, and to profit by every vicissitude in human affairs? The answer is, that in relation to that most important part of government, the knowing how to adapt laws and usages to an altered state of society, the knowing when and how far reform has become inevitable—she has never evinced one particle of true policy; be it a feature of wisdom or of folly, she never yields; of wisdom, it will of course be regarded by those who venerate her as the despository of that truth which is itself unchangeable; of folly, by those who think she is incrusted with the errors and corruptions of other ages, which the present will not bear. With the same desperate consistency did she act at the period of the Reformation; the reforms she attempted were all nugatory, or insignificant; she adhered with inflexible pertinacity to every essential corruption of her system; and when at length, after numberless attempts to evade it, she yielded to the clamors of all Christendom for a greater council, she stereotyped all her principal errors and gave them the deliberate and irrevocable sanction of Trent. The decrees of that council have thus been, in a thousand cases, a millstone about her own neck—binding on her irrevocable decisions, when time, the great reformer, had already proclaimed them obsolete.

How true it is that Rome has again and again egregiously miscalculated in relation to the elements of discontent which lay around her, and thus her seeming victories have often only been defeat in another form. What a comfort there is in the thought that God reigns, and that he cannot allow error to be permanently victorious! Complete defeat must finally overtake Romanism, which fact will prove an inexpressible blessing to her own people, and to the world at large. Says Dr. Smith:

As to Romanism, I have shown you that its present stage is that of decay and swiftly-approaching destruction. Its rise took place one thousand three hundred years ago; it reached the height of its dominion *five* hundred years ago; it received its first fatal blow in the Reformation, over *three* hundred years ago; its second, in the French Revolution, at the end of the last century; and a third in the unification of Italy and the liberation of Rome itself from papal rule, in 1870. The final blow is yet to fall. . . The measures of Pius V., a ruthless and resolute man, who set himself with determined purpose, and with all the art and craft of a true Italian, to stem the tide of defeat, and change the fortunes of the field; the co-operation with him of Philip II. of Spain, and of the Guises and Lorraines in France; the institution of the Order of the Jesuits, and the founding of the Inquisition—by such measures and instruments as these, a reaction was effected, and some of the ground lost seemed for a time recovered. But as we look back over the histories of those centuries, we perceive in the papacy, as shown in another like connection, not a power with vitality unimpaired, standing up resolutely and successfully against formidable assaults, but a power doomed and already defeated, desperately rallying its shattered strength in a struggle already hopeless, and by its furious efforts only hastening its own destruction.

The Inquisition was long a terror; but it was far more a reproach to the system in whose support an instrument so hideous could be used, and has in the end wrought far more mischief to the power that employed it than to that against which it was used. The Jesuits have served the evil cause to which they devoted themselves, body and soul, with most extraordinary fidelity; but they have, time after time, made themselves so intolerable by their unprincipled courses, as that Roman Catholic princes and republics have been compelled to cast them out as a menace and a disgrace. The persistency with which the popes themselves have clung

to those pretensions which even in such a time as that of the Middle Ages they found it difficult to enforce, assuming even in this nineteenth century to be supreme over all governments, and to have a right to rule alike the counsels and the consciences of rulers and peoples; the measures adopted by them, or under their direction, such as the proclamation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility by the Vatican Council of 1869–70, attempting thus to force upon an age of enlightenment and free thought doctrines which not even medieval subserviency would accept—in all these ways popery has, by its struggles for self-recovery, simply been making more complete and hopeless its actual downfall.

There is a prophecy in these things themselves. They presage for the Roman hierarchy a complete and final overthrow. How far in the future this ultimate event may lie, no one of us can say; but that it is sure to come, the signs of the present time unite with Apocalyptic testimony in declaring.

This interesting quotation is found on pages 257–58 of the "Commentary on the Revelation," by Justin A. Smith, D. D., American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. Those who are interested in the study of the character and history of Romanism will be greatly aided by this fresh and able commentary, which deserves a place in every Christian household in the land. Read it and be convinced that Romanism is the Great Apostasy, whose complete overthrow will send a thrill of triumphant joy throughout the kingdom of God, both in heaven and on earth. May that glorious day come quickly!

CHAPTER XVIII

RELIGION AND MORALITY DIVORCED

THE tendency of every religion, in so far as it is merely human, is to separate religion and morality. Convenient excuses and remedies are sought and found for the weaknesses and sins of the flesh. In many cases, while clinging tenaciously to certain forms and ceremonies, all hope of a true and high morality has been abandoned, and men and women have freely yielded their "members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," excusing themselves on the ground that the body cannot be brought into subjection. Experience proves that the natural fruit of such a doctrine would be a low standard of life and great irregularities of conduct.

But such was not the method of the Saviour. He set before men a high and holy standard, and in his own life left them the inestimable legacy of a perfect example. Though aware of the weaknesses of human nature, he was uncompromising in his requirements, all of which may be summed up in that wonderful exhortation : "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

While no sect is above reproach, is it not true that the Roman Catholic Church, in her doctrine and her practice, has drifted the farthest from the perfect standard which the Son of God has given us? No one can deny that there have been, and are still, good men in the Church of Rome, men who have been an honor to the cause of Christ and a blessing to the world ; and yet after a careful study of facts, are we not justified in saying that Romanism has really divorced religion and morality, so that the line between the church and the world has been completely obliterated?

The dissimilarity between a purely Catholic community and a purely Protestant one lying side by side, has often been remarked upon, the advantage being given always to the Protestant community.

In England, where the Roman Catholics are less than five per cent. of the population, they contribute, wherever they are collected, from sixteen to sixty-seven per cent. of the criminals. In Manchester for three years past the ratio has been forty-three per cent. In Liverpool from fifty to sixty-seven per cent.[1]

How often has it been proved that in the government of cities, just in proportion as the Romish element prevails, corruption and abuses abound, the men who do these things being protected and even encouraged by the church! In all countries where Romanism has long held sway, to say the least, the moral tone of the people is at a low ebb, and the natural consequences can easily be imagined.

The longer one stays in Italy and the more he mixes with the people and becomes acquainted with their life and character, the more is he persuaded that there must be some radical defect in the Romish system itself. The moral fiber of the nation is noticeably weak.

In Italy almost everything has been done with the sanction and even under the protection of the Church of Rome. For long years, and until the pope lost his temporal power, this was the case with the lottery in Rome. Every Saturday several dignitaries of the church met to preside at the weekly drawing, to announce the result to the expectant multitude, and to receive the large sums which had been pilfered from the people during the week. Instead of seeking to correct and destroy this dreadful evil, which has of late so justly stirred the American public, and over which they seem to have won such a signal victory, priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes have encouraged and controlled it, willing to sacrifice

1 "Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome," p. 184.

the material and moral interests of the people in order to gratify their own lust for gain. What the pope once did the Italian government is doing to-day, for the lottery is a national institution in Italy, and a source of immense revenue.

Almost every Italian will tell you that there was a time when the dreaded brigands of the Roman province were under the special protection of the pope, and some even say that there was an understanding that the proceeds of their thefts and murders were to be equally divided between protector and protected. Certain it is that their nefarious work continued to prosper while the pope was in power, and only ceased in consequence of the vigorous and severe measures adopted by the present government. Houses of ill-fame also had papal authority to exist in Rome, paying a heavy tax to the church for the privilege, and many Italians claim that the priests were the chief patrons of these institutions. Two popes, Leo X. and Clement VII., and Bellarmino and other theologians, taught that the pope did not do wrong when he tolerated houses of ill-fame and received a tribute or tax from the same. Surely facts are stranger than fiction!

Under such circumstances, how was it possible for the people to reach a high moral standard, or to have any confidence in the power or even in the intention of the church in this matter? How natural that many should excuse themselves when they fell into glaring sins of the flesh, on the ground that the priests did the same, and because they had been taught that forms and ceremonies and submission to the rules of the church would atone for every evil of life, and that even though a man died unpardoned and unsaved, well-paid masses would ensure his release from punishment and a safe arrival into paradise.

In proportion as any religion depends upon forms and ceremonies, will it fail in imparting genuine life and purity; and, alas, too often have these forms been used as a cloak to hide one's character, or at most, as a palliative for the conscience.

In reading the life of one of the great heroes of modern times, "Mackay of Uganda," I was struck by these words, found on page 89: "These whitewashed sepulchres, as all Arabs are, go daily through all the prayers and other public performances of their blind belief, yet one and all are guilty of daily acts of the most outrageous description. It is the most devout and pious who are the greatest rogues."

I am informed that probably every house of ill-fame in Italy contains one or more images of the Virgin, or of some other saint, with lamps burning before them perpetually, for less than this would be very improper and might expose the establishment to some disaster. A few days ago a man in Florence was heard to utter a fearful oath because he had reached the church too late for mass. If one reaches the church before half of the mass is recited he can join in, and the merit and blessing are the same as if he had been there from the beginning. This man had come in just a little too late, and on his way home he was swearing vigorously about it.

In Italy priests and bishops may be guilty of great immoralities, and yet in no way compromise their position in the eyes of the church. It really seems that the church takes little account of the private life of the clergy, winking at almost anything unless there is danger of a very great and damaging public scandal. Many Italians would reply to this that the church authorities cannot afford to do otherwise, as they are all in the same boat. Even when a scandal is made, the priest in question is only removed to another place where his former life is unknown.

Last summer, in conversation with a young physician from a town near Florence, I learned that the life of the parish priest was such that a number of the citizens of the place felt compelled to send a statement of the facts to the bishop, concluding with a petition to have him removed. The bishop unhesitatingly refused to grant the request on the ground

that the priest said mass regularly, confessed the people, baptized the children, buried the dead, and submitted to the regulations of the church.

The following was told me by an ex-priest, who once occupied a prominent place as a confessor: "One morning a young priest, a student of theology, who was spending his vacation at home, came to me for confession, and to my surprise he declared that he had co-habited with his own sister, and desired absolution for the same. I asked him if it was the first time that such a thing had happened. He hesitated to give an answer, but finally confessed that for four years, during his three months' vacation, this had gone on. I told him that I could not give him absolution unless he would promise to abstain in the future, and unless he would at once leave home so as to avoid the temptation. But he refused to make either promise, telling me at the same time that if I did not give him absolution he could easily find a priest who would. Seeing that I remained firm, he rose and went away and I heard from him no more."

Another priest came to confess that he kept a boy, who was at the same time his assistant in the church, making the responses at mass and other services. "And you come here expecting God will pardon you while you still continue in sin?" replied the confessor. "But why not?" answered the priest, "many other priests do the same thing, and why should not I?" He also went away to find a more indulgent confessor, and of course he succeeded.

In 1885 the Italian government found it necessary to close a Catholic seminary where youths were being prepared for the priesthood, because after a careful examination, it was ascertained that sodomy was the daily vice of the institution, every one of the one hundred and twenty students having been found guilty, even the director, a priest, having set the example.

I once spent a summer in an Italian village, and I found

that the parish priest was acknowledged by the entire community to be a drunkard and a libertine, and yet he kept his place as if he were the best man living.

A few years ago a preaching friar, who had a great reputation among the common people as a "moving" speaker, went to a Tuscan town to conduct a fifteen days' mission, a sort of revival meeting. In the house where he lodged there were two young women, sisters, and nine months later they were both mothers. Each confessed that the friar was the father of their offspring. And yet this friar continues his work of preaching with no interruption, though of course it would not be prudent to return to the above-named village.

Only two months ago I visited a town where I was told of a very similar case, a priest having lived for years with a concubine until his influence in the place was destroyed, and he had to be sent elsewhere to conduct his revival meetings, though he made frequent visits to the woman he left behind.

While there are some exceptions to the general rule, the condition of the priests is very sad and demoralizing and perhaps even hopeless under the present *régime*. A system that cannot do more for its ministers than this must be radically wrong, and a church that winks at such things and retains such men in its fellowship, committing to their keeping the most sacred duties of life, cannot surely be a true church of Jesus Christ.

I am told that no other city in Italy is more immoral than Venice, priests and people being very much alike in this matter. Houses of ill-fame abound, and concubinage is too common to excite remark. And yet many of these very persons attend regularly to their so-called religious duties, mass, confession, penance, communion, etc. A policeman in Venice, who in his official capacity often visited houses of ill-fame, informed me that these women always keep an image of the Virgin in their room with a lighted lamp before it. Some are specially devoted to St. Joseph, and when a young

man named Joseph visits them he pays nothing, the poor women actually claiming to give this as a special offering to Saint Joseph. One of these women who was an accomplice in the murder of the head of the establishment, wore on her body constantly a leather belt stuck full of fine tacks, which pierced and irritated the skin, keeping it raw and sore. Penance and profligacy often go hand in hand, and those who seem most devout are often very careless about their daily lives.

Charles Lempiere, a writer on Mexico, says: "The Mexican church, as a church, fills no mission of virtue, no mission of morality. Virtue cannot exist in its pestiferous atmosphere. The cause of morality does not come within its practice."

The condition of Rome under many of the popes is known to all the world, and yet perhaps very few are aware how very sad and terrible it was. In that very interesting book, "Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome," page 186, in speaking of the wickedness of the local church of Rome, the author says:

> All these considerations, however, sink into entire insignificance when we come face to face with the question as to the sanctity of the Roman See and its occupants. As in the case of unity, so in that of holiness, it is precisely Rome which has sunk lowest, longest, and oftenest; which has been the foulest cesspool of wickedness, profligacy, depravity of all kinds; which has had the greatest number of abandoned criminals amongst its bishops. These are strong words. Now to justify them. Here is what Cardinal Baronius, the Ultramontane annalist, says of the Roman Church in the tenth century: "What was then the semblance of the Holy Roman Church? As foul as it could be; when harlots superior in power as in profligacy, governed at Rome, at whose will Sees were transferred, bishops were appointed, and, what is horrible and awful to say, their paramours were intruded into the See of Peter. This period covered a space of more than thirty years and the reigns of nine popes."
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> But Gilbert Genebrard, archbishop of Aix (1537–1597), writing of the same era, makes the duration of papal profligacy much longer: "This age has been unfortunate, in so far that during nearly a hundred and fifty years about fifty popes have fallen away from the virtues of their prede-

cessors, being apostates, or apostatical, rather than apostolical."[1] That is to say, about *one-fifth* of all the popes who have sat at Rome are hereby charged with grievous criminality. In the eleventh century, the writings of St. Peter Damiani, cardinal bishop of Ostia, paint the morals and lives of the bishops and clergy in the most revolting colors; in the fourteenth, the great Catholic poet Petrarch, describing the Papal Court, then at Avignon, speaks of it as the Babylon of the Apocalypse, which had filled the sack of God's anger with impious vices, following as its own gods not even Jupiter or Pallas, but Bacchus and Venus. Again, he calls it "fountain of grief, river of wrath, school of errors, temple of heresy, formerly Rome, now false and guilty Babylon, forge of lies, horrible prison, hell upon earth."[2]

And Boccaccio's story in the same century is well known, how a Parisian Christian endeavored to convert Abraham, a Jew, who proposed making a journey to Rome to see for himself if the morals of the clergy there proved the superiority of their creed over his own. His friend, knowing too well the real state of things, endeavors to dissuade him, but in vain. On reaching Rome, Abraham found the pope, cardinals, and clergy immersed in all kinds of vice; and returning to Paris, became a Christian, and was baptized, on the ground that no religion which was not divine could survive such enormities on the part of its ministers.[3] But what is not so familiar to the ordinary reader is, that this story is no malicious invention of Boccaccio's, as others similar in his collection may probably be, for it is recorded as a literal historical fact by Benvenuto da Imola, in his "Commentary on Dante," written in 1376.

About the same time were issued the "Revelations of St. Bridget" (1302–1373), which are allowed as authentic by Pope Benedict XIV. She says: "The pope is a murderer of souls, he destroys and flays the flock of Christ, he is more cruel than Judas, more unjust than Pilate. All the Ten Commandments he has changed into this one, Money, Money. . . . The pope and his clergy are rather the forerunners of Antichrist than the servants of Christ; the pope's worldly court plunders the heavenly court of Christ; the clergy read no more in the book of God, but in the book of the world; the reason of God is foolishness to them; the care for souls a fable."

Roscoe, in his "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici," speaking of a base conspiracy in Florence against the Medici family, at the head of which was Pope Sixtus IV., says:

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[1] Genebrard, "*Chron. Sac.*," IV., Ann. 901, Cologne, 1571.
[2] Petrarch, "*Sonnette e Canzoni*," *Parte* IV., 15, 16. [3] "Decameron," I., 2.

A transaction in which a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, and several other ecclesiastics, associated themselves with a band of ruffians to destroy two men who were an honor to their age and country, and purposed to perpetrate their crime at a season of hospitality in the sanctuary of a Christian church, and at the very moment of the elevation of the host, when the audience bowed down before it, and the assassins were presumed to be in the immediate presence of God.

Two of these assassins were priests.

In the "Report of the Committee of Cardinals" to Paul III., in 1538, they declared that the root of all the evils of the church was in the Roman Curia itself; that simony was the order of the day; that the sacraments were openly sold for money; that the conventual Orders had become such a pestiferous example to the world, and so grievous a scandal, that the whole of them, without exception, ought to be summarily abolished; that the theological seminaries were at once schools of immorality and skepticism.[1] The picture given in this report is just about as bad as it can be. There has been improvement since then, but even to-day the situation is bad enough in all Catholic countries, and the moral standard is painfully low. It is a well-known fact that during the reign of Pius IX., the second position in the Court of Rome, which still claims to be the visible embodiment of the kingdom of God on earth, was held for more than twenty-five years by Cardinal Antonelli, a man who was notoriously immoral and unscrupulous in his life and conduct. Who can deny that Rome has divorced religion and morality?

Signor D. Silvagni, in his valuable work, "*La Corte e la Società Romana nei secoli XVIII e XIX.*,"[2] gives a fearful picture of Rome as it was about a hundred years ago. Speaking of the Church of Rome, he says:

But in spite of its outside effect, and its profane assumption of holiness, this ancient *régime* was as corrupt as it well could be. The greatest

[1] "*Conc. Delect. Cardinal*," in Natal. Alexand., "Hist. Eccl.," Paris, 1744, Vol. XVIII., pp. 87–94.

[2] Translated into English under the title, "Rome: its Princes, Priests, and People."

abominations were hidden under the veil of sanctity; society was rotten to its core; and priests and prelates, princes and people, vied with each other in riotous excess. Many documents relating to the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries still exist, which contain statements so scandalous they could not be printed in the present day.

He says further that robberies were of constant occurrence in the dark streets of Rome. Now and then loud cries for help and screams of "murder" rent the air. Any woman compelled by dire necessity to venture out after sunset ran an almost certain chance of being outraged and assaulted, and the police were constantly coming to blows with evil-doers, and with the hired assassins of princes, ambassadors, and cardinals. Morning often brought strange revelations of the evil wrought during the hours of darkness, and it was no uncommon sight to see a criminal taken past on a mule, exposed in the pillory, and subjected to the "*cavaletto*," or to watch another poor wretch dangling from the gallows in the Piazza del Popolo, without having undergone even the form of a trial, or having had a chance to say a word in his defense. The lower orders were frightfully brutal and bloodthirsty, addicted to drink, prone to jealousy, superstitious, credulous, and ignorant.

When Joseph II., emperor of Germany, visited Rome in 1769, he was surprised and disgusted with much that he saw. In a letter to Vienna, he said: "These cardinals swarmed around me with as much impertinent curiosity as any vulgar crowd ever displayed at the sight of an elephant or a rhinoceros." He said also of the College of Cardinals, or Holy Senate, as it was then called: "It is impossible to know it and not despise it." The emperor's secret agent, Brunati, described the members of the Holy Senate in the following biting words: "Bernis is a libertine, Serbelloni a miser, Malvazzi a frivolous fool, York an idiot, Telada an intriguer, Veterani an imbecile."

Italians themselves being witnesses, the morals of the people are in a bad way throughout Italy, and yet thousands of these very persons, whose lives are the very antipodes of the life and teachings of Christ, call themselves good Catholics, go to mass, repeat their prayers, and send for the priest when they come to die. So long as they perform certain rites and ceremonies and confess at least once a year to the priest, let their daily conduct be what it may, they still remain in full communion with the church, and are denied none of its privileges. Surely this is a divorcement of religion and morality thoroughly unscriptural and ruinous in the extreme.

What is the cause and secret of this trouble? The Church of Rome has abandoned the great fundamental truth of God's word—*complete justification by faith alone.* This is the *sine qua non* of salvation and of sanctification. He who trusts in human merit is in constant danger of despair or of presumption. Let men believe that the church can save them and the result cannot be otherwise than what we have already seen. When the Church of Rome returns to God's method of salvation, then and not till then may we expect a change in the life of the people. What an argument and encouragement for mission work in papal lands!

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHRIST OF ROMANISM

HOW vividly the gospel paints the scene—Mary standing before the Saviour's tomb, and weeping because they have taken away her Lord, and she knows not where they have laid him. A weeping Mary at the door of every Catholic church in Italy would be a most appropriate figure. The Christ has been taken away and those who seek for him know not where to find him. One who knows Catholic churches in Italy can but sympathize with a well-known traveler and writer, who, while visiting a Catholic cathedral in Mexico, toward the conclusion of what he called a meaningless and semi-pagan performance, exclaimed: "Let us leave this place; God is on the outside!"

A cathedral without God, a church without Christ! What an anomaly, what a sad sight to angels in heaven and to saints on earth! What a cemetery for the souls of men! What a theatre for the great arch-enemy! When the Saviour visited the temple he found it a den of thieves, and not what his Father intended it to be, a house of prayer. To-day it is much the same in Italy. In the Romish system, with its elaborate ritual and awe-inspiring service, there is little place for the real Christ. His presence would be most embarrassing, not to say unwelcome. Christ is known by name, but his true character is little understood.

The cross is one of the most familiar objects in this land; but the real significance of the perfect and all-pervading sacrifice which was offered thereon is a dead letter to the mass of the people. The material cross has even become an object of veneration and worship. In many instances it has been

officially claimed and proclaimed that the cross is endowed with latent miraculous virtue, requiring only faith to make it evident, and to cause it to be the medium of both temporal and spiritual blessings. I have myself seen a cross which the priests say once spoke to a devout worshiper. This report was enough to delude thousands of souls, who flocked hither to adore this wonderful piece of wood and to receive some special blessing.

In Romanism Christ has virtually been set aside, and convenient substitutes have been found for him. On approaching most Catholic churches in Italy, one reads above the door, "Daily Plenary Indulgence." Here every one is offered an entire remission of penalties due for all sins, but in looking carefully into the matter one will find that Christ has little or nothing to do with the transaction. Just inside the church stands a basin or marble font of so-called holy water, to which is attributed virtue which belongs to Christ alone. To enter or leave the church without dipping the finger into that water and crossing one's self, would be worse than to forget entirely the name of Christ in all the rest of the service. To right and left are altars and shrines dedicated usually to the Virgin Mary, or to some less important saints, to whom the worshiper is expected to direct his petitions, and through whom and often from whom his blessings are expected to come. Pictures of the saints are set forth prominently, with prayers on each side which are to be offered, the blessing in question depending on the number of times they are repeated. These prayers often ascribe divine attributes to the saints, thus putting them in the place of the only divine Son, and robbing him of the honor due his name.

One hundred and twenty-one churches in Rome are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and only fifteen to Christ. The rosary consists of one hundred and sixty-six beads, which the worshiper uses to aid him in his devotions. These beads

represent *one* Creed, *fifteen* Our Fathers, and *one hundred and fifty* Hail Marys. Mary has forty-one festivals a year in Rome while Christ has only twenty-two. These things speak for themselves, and tell a sad story.

The confessional stands suggestively near the altar, and he who sits within to hear the secrets of the human heart, occupies the place of Christ, and claims the power and the right to say, "*Ego te absolvo*," "I absolve thee." If the required conditions are not complied with, he claims also the right to refuse pardon and absolution, thus shutting the door of heaven against those who do not obey his will, and making a man's salvation depend on the caprice—I use the word deliberately—of a priest. My Bible tells me: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." But Romanism in Italy virtually says: "Confess to the priest and thou shalt be saved." Again I read in the divine word: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," but on the lips of the priests this has become: "Without confession to a priest no man can enter paradise." The priest has foisted himself into the place of Christ, and many, alas! in accepting the human substitute have lost sight entirely of the divine original.

Another substitute for the real Christ is the host, or the bread and wine of the communion. Every day the priest professes to perform a wonderful miracle, the conversion of the bread and wine into the living Christ, so that each drop of wine and each particle of bread becomes the actual "body, soul, and divinity" of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those words of the Saviour, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life," have received a literal interpretation, thus making salvation depend upon the eating of the host, and rendering it sure to all who do thus partake at the last moment of life.

Once while driving in Naples we met a procession of priests carrying the host to a dying man. The driver turning to

me exclaimed: "There comes Jesus Christ." This last act of that dying man was the eating of that consecrated wafer in order that having the Christ within him he might be sure of salvation. This consecrated wafer is regarded by the people as a sort of talisman to weaken the power of death and give assurance for the future. To die without this is the greatest possible misfortune. Alas, alas, how many are satisfied with the material figure because they know nothing of the spiritual reality! They stop short of the saving truth, never having heard the Saviour's own interpretation of these words as given to his astonished and perplexed disciples: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

Another substitute for the real work of Christ is penance, for Romanism teaches that the end and object of these self-inflicted sufferings is that they may be literal atonements and satisfactions made to God for sins, not only for one's self, but even for others; in short, literal sacrifices like that of Christ. It is said of St. Pacificus, that during his last illness, supposing that no one was in the room, being deaf and nearly blind, he rose from his bed and placing himself devoutly on his knees, recited three Ave Marias, saying at the conclusion with great earnestness, "In satisfaction for my sins."

It is also said that he "cheerfully took upon himself to satisfy, both by prayer and mortification, some portion of the punishment which the souls of the members of the suffering church are doomed to undergo in purgatory." Even to-day there are those in Italy who substitute penance for faith in Christ, and vainly seek pardon and peace through their own self-inflicted sufferings and acquired merits.

We read that "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." Judging from what one sees in Italy to-day, and from what is known of the past

history of the Catholic Church in this country, it would seem that Romanism was manifested that the devil might destroy the work of the Son of God, and we are compelled to admit that he has been painfully and mysteriously successful. The real Christ, with his all-sufficient atonement, has been set aside and many substitutes have been put into his place. The greatest confusion exists in the minds of many of the people concerning the true relation between God and Christ and Mary, and as to what they are to do in order to be saved. It really seems that the church prefers to leave the people in a confused state of mind on all points except one, viz, implicit and unquestioning obedience.

In the summer of 1891, while stopping in a mountain village of Tuscany, I gathered the following facts from a good woman who had heard the gospel in Florence and had left the Church of Rome to become an Evangelical. "As a Catholic I was very ignorant, and though I often went to mass I could not tell why, nor did I understand anything that was said. I went to confession occasionally, because my mother sent me, or because I was afraid I would be criticised if I did not go. Sometimes I feared I could not be saved if I stayed away entirely, because I believed the absolution of the priest to be necessary to salvation. No one had ever taught me anything about God. I had heard of the Eternal Father, but always thought of him as I saw him in pictures, an old man with a long white beard, and a very serious, solemn face. I was afraid of him and did not dare to pray to him. I was very ignorant about Christ. I thought he was born like any other child, with Joseph as his real father and Mary as his mother, and that he was divine simply because Mary was divine. Hence I prayed to both alike with perfect sincerity. A lady who visited the town some years ago gave me a Bible and I began to read it with pleasure. Soon after, a preaching friar came here to hold a series of meetings, and I went to confession and he learned that I

had a Bible ; he declared that it was a very bad book, and took it away from me, giving me a Catholic book of devotion instead. But I never forgot what I had read, and often longed for another Bible."

A woman told me that there was a time when she honestly believed that Mary was more divine than Christ, and that as his mother, she would naturally have more power and authority. It had never for a moment occurred to her that it was improper to pray to Mary ; on the contrary, she felt it to be her duty and her highest privilege. A Roman lady on hearing that my wife did not pray to the Virgin, but put all her trust in Christ, implored her to try the experiment for once only, for she felt assured that the result would be so sweetly surprising that she would never be willing to leave off the habit. And, sad to say, this Roman lady was in earnest, and insisted that her greatest blessings come from Mary, to whom she prays every day, and without whom she could not live at all.

Having lost sight, or rather never having heard, of the biblical idea of the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ, that we are complete in him, the people are running vainly hither and thither, now appealing to this saint and now to that, to-day bowing before some privileged altar or kissing the foot of some miracle-working image, to-morrow doing penance before some special shrine, constantly turning from one refuge to another, seeking rest, but finding none. For the people one can have only the most profound pity. But for the false shepherds who give a stone for bread he can find no excuse.

Alas, that these things are so ! And yet the loving, patient Saviour is only waiting to return and take the place which is his and his alone, that he may be enthroned in every heart as prophet, priest, and king, the only mediator between God and man. This is the reform so much needed in Italy, for when this is effected, Romanism will die a natural death, and surely, though perhaps slowly, the people will return to prim-

itive purity and simplicity of doctrine, ritual, and life. This above all others is the consummation devoutly wished by the writer and by all others engaged in mission work in this country. May the happy day of its complete realization come quickly.

CHAPTER XX

VISITING THE POPE

FOR most persons a visit to the pope means an immense deal of trouble. To begin with, his receptions are usually private in character and a special permit must be secured, and unless one has a friend at court his application may be neglected a long time or even refused altogether.

A Florentine maid informed me that once she had occasion to spend six months in Rome with her mistress. Delighted at this opportunity of seeing the head of her church, she at once made application for a ticket to one of his receptions, but was told that she would have to apply next time. When the next time came she received the same response, until finally the six months passed away and she was no nearer the pope than the day she reached Rome. She confessed that she was disappointed and even disgusted and left Rome saying to herself: "Why is it so difficult to see the pope, who claims to be the representative of Jesus on earth, when the Lord himself never refused to see any one at any time."

In the case of persons of rank, especially if they are foreigners and Protestants, no such delay is required. When the Princess of Wales was in Rome with her son, Prince George, they were received in the most cordial and informal manner by the aged pontiff, although they entirely disregarded the rules of Vatican etiquette and appeared in their ordinary traveling dress. It is well known that a very earnest effort is being made to Romanize England, and bring her back to the bosom of the mother church, and the favor shown by the pope to Englishmen has given rise to the following conundrum, well known in Rome:

"How can one be sure of access to the holy father's presence? Declare you are an Englishman and swear you are a heretic."

To declare you are a heretic, however, does not always answer, unless there is royal blood in your veins, or your position in the world is peculiarly prominent and influential, or unless your millions cannot be counted on your fingers. In the spring of 1893 three American gentlemen applied to the president of the American College in Rome for a permit to see the pope. "Are you Catholics?" he asked. "Two of us are, but the other is a Protestant," replied the spokesman. When the recommendations finally came, one had written across it in large letters, "Protestant," and on reaching the Vatican only two passed in. Evidently there was some special design in this unusual refusal.

Some years ago a prominent American Baptist preacher and his wife were in Rome, and when the question of visiting the pope was under discussion, the preacher declined to go, declaring that in his case it would be a violation of conscience to kiss the pope's hand, or bow the knee in his presence. "But," argued the wife, "I shall do neither the one nor the other." When at last she found herself in the pope's private audience chamber, and the little company began to pass one by one before his holiness,—as he is blasphemously styled,—she was dismayed at finding that all who went before her either bowed the knee or kissed his hand. Though trembling with embarrassment, she determined not to yield, hoping that her conduct would attract no special attention; but to her great confusion the pope deliberately stopped her, and looking straight into her eyes, said with his sweetest smile, "My daughter, do you refuse to kiss an old man's hand?"

This good woman had no desire to repeat her experiment, nor would she advise any Protestant to follow her example. Many, however, are doing this every year, despite the twinges of conscience.

At another reception the pope was surprised to hear an American young lady speaking Italian like a Roman, and he said to her, "How is it that you speak Italian so well? You must have been in Rome a long time."

"I have been here twenty years, since I was a child," she replied.

"What!" exclaimed the pope, "twenty years in Rome and not yet within the fold of the true church?"

Confused and hardly knowing what to say, the young lady responded, "But no one has ever tried to convert me."

Nothing more was said, and nothing more was needed. From that day she was an object of special attention. An accomplished priest was at once appointed to study carefully her case, and to see that she was converted to the Catholic faith. So wise and wily did he prove himself, that in less than two years his task was accomplished. Let all who come to Rome be very careful what they do and say in the presence of the pope.

Before 1870 the pope often gave public receptions in Saint Peter's, and a sight of him was nothing rare and special. But since that time he calls himself a prisoner, never appearing on the streets of Rome, and seldom giving a public reception. Now that pilgrimages to Rome are becoming the order of the day, Leo XIII. has found it expedient and desirable to adopt a less exclusive policy than that of Pius IX., and hence his public appearances in Saint Peter's have been quite frequent of late. During late years this great cathedral has several times been crowded with an expectant multitude gathered from all parts of the world, each anxious to catch a glimpse of the old man who is at the head of the most widespread organization this world has ever seen. On such occasions one may remain a simple spectator of the elaborate services and the regal pomp that always accompany these receptions. It was under such circumstances that I had my first and only view of the pope.

The ceremonies were announced for eight A. M., but by five o'clock many were already wending their way toward Saint Peter's. At half-past seven I encountered a vast throng hurrying along the main thoroughfare, and the immense piazza in front of the cathedral was a moving mass of carriages and human beings. On entering I found thousands of persons already present, each anxious to have the best place in the building. With difficulty I succeeded in securing a place near the aisle along which the pope was to pass. The ends of the earth were gathered about me, and the sight was such as to convince any one that it would be difficult to find in any quarter of the globe a more picturesque throng. The black robes of priests, the bizarre costume of Swiss guards, the regulation black dress and veil of women who were in attendance as pilgrims, the bright gowns of seminarists, the sombre garbs of various orders of nuns and sisters of charity, the striking attire of the *Guardia Nobile* and private chamberlains, the diplomatic uniforms—all formed a curious medley of costume and color.

The tribune was occupied by ambassadors, special envoys, and papal diplomats, while high up in the great dome, directly above the central altar where the pope was to celebrate mass, two hundred "sweet singers" arranged themselves around the railing, and the far-famed silver trumpeters took their places. Most intense, though restrained, excitement prevailed, and many false alarms startled the expectant crowd to fruitless tiptoeing before the papal *cortège* added its more brilliant touch of variety and color as the glowing stream of richly attired ecclesiastics swept in—the "college of Cardinals," the "college of Patriarchs," Palatine prelates, all of the pontifical court.

About nine o'clock the expectant and impatient throng was thrilled by the sound of a little bell, and instantly every eye was fixed upon the doorway through which the pope was to pass. Again the bell sounded, a moment of hushed ex-

pectancy, then the great curtain parted, and Leo XIII. appeared, borne high in his chair of state. The feathery fans waved in the air on each side of the pale, feeble old man, arrayed in all the splendor of his rich gold-embroidered vestments. He was preceded by a detachment of his bodyguard, splendid-looking young men in most fantastic uniform, each carrying a shining rifle of the most approved make, as much as to say, "Insult him, if you dare!" Two lines of armed soldiers guarded the passageway from the entrance door to the high altar, and as the aged pontiff passed along he cast a benignant smile upon the people, and extended one bony hand right and left in benediction of the kneeling mass, though he held to the arm of his chair with the other.

As he ascended the high altar the soldiers and the pilgrims rent the air with loud cheers, and the "sweet singers" broke forth in "*Tu es Petrus*," which echoed and re-echoed through the vastness of the great cathedral. When the wafer was finally consecrated by the pope, and held up for adoration, the two lines of soldiers, with much noise and rattle of arms fell as one man upon their knees, each holding his bright carbine in his left hand, while his right was raised to his cap in the form of a military salute.

Not only the soldiers, but nearly every one in that vast multitude either fell on bended knee or stood with bowed head while the pope remained holding up the host for adoration. A nun who stood by my side, seeing that I remained in an erect position, with my eyes fixed on the pope, touched my elbow, and in a sort of frightened whisper said, "Why do you not bow your head?" Her reproof carried little weight, for she and her companions had been in a constant giggle the whole morning, barely managing to straighten their faces and assume a devout aspect for the critical moment. Thousands of others seemed to be in very much the same mood.

Mass ended, the reception of pilgrims began, each one of the thousands present wishing to be received in person. For

seven long hours the procession went on, and the poor old pope, who has already passed his fourscore years, found it necessary to take a short rest and renew his exhausted strength with a glass of wine and a light lunch. Each pilgrim received a document prepared for this special occasion, and a tiny cloth cross, on which were printed the famous words which Constantine saw in his vision, "*In hoc signo vinces.*" These crosses had been specially blessed by the pope, and were carried away to be used as charms. Some of the pilgrims, however, were not unwilling to dispose of theirs for a consideration, for I managed to secure one myself for one franc, or twenty cents.

By two o'clock not more than two thousand people were left in the great cathedral, and I was able to take my stand within thirty feet of the spot where the pope sat on his throne blessing the pilgrims as they passed before him. I noticed that all kissed his hand, not a few performing this act of homage on their knees. An American lady, a good Presbyterian, who longed to stand before the pope and look straight into his eyes, succeeded in purchasing a pilgrim's ticket after she reached Saint Peter's. Greatly amused at the idea, she left her husband's side and fell into line, determined to get the full benefit of her ticket. On finding herself really in the presence of the great pontiff, surrounded by his cardinals and bishops, and guarded by a body of armed soldiers, such was her confusion and embarrassment that she extended her *gloved* hand for a regular American hand-shake, which the pope received with a mischievous, but reproving smile, after which our good Presbyterian lady, more than half dazed, beat a hasty retreat, resolved to avoid such situations in the future.

Finally the last pilgrim has been received, the signal for retiring is given, the rattle of arms is heard as the Palatine guards fall into line on each side of the aisle, and visitors who have been patiently waiting seven hours with the hope of get-

ting a good view of the great pontiff, run hither and thither seeking convenient places. Borne aloft by four richly robed chamberlains of his palace, the pope moves down the aisle, dispensing his blessing to right and left as he proceeds, while the people break forth into loud cheers, and again the arches of Saint Peter's echo the thousandth time the cry, "Long live the pope!"

As he passed almost within arm's reach of where I stood, it was easy to recognize that, in spite of royal splendor and proud papal pretensions, the great head of the Roman Catholic Church was pale and weak, scarcely able to move his hand from right to left in token of granting his blessing to the people. Just as he passed the spot where I was standing he pressed his hand to his temples in evident suffering, and for a moment the stereotyped pontifical smile vanished. My heart was touched with sympathy for the poor old man weighted down with such cares and duties in spite of his more than fourscore years, and compelled to play his part whether he has the strength for it or not. At a former reception so great was the strain upon his exhausted energies that he fainted on his throne, and some time elapsed before the ceremonies could proceed. Who can doubt that when at last he found himself in the quiet and privacy of his own room Leo XIII. drew a sigh of relief?

As I walked toward the great doorway which leads into the piazza, I could but murmur to myself, "All this pomp and ceremony and rattle of arms and human pride and papal pretensions, is this what the Saviour desires and approves?"

CHAPTER XXI

ROMANISM AND SUPERSTITION

THERE is something in Romanism which encourages superstition, and the two seem to be natural companions. Wherever Romanism prevails, there superstition is rife. One cannot mingle with the people in this country without being impressed by this fact. Nor, in the case of Italy at least, need we go far to seek the reason. If it be true that ignorance is the mother of superstition, then one cannot wonder that the masses of the people in this country are superstitious. According to the census of 1881 about seventy per cent. of the entire population, that is, nearly twenty millions, are unable to read. With the exception of Spain, perhaps no other civilized country can show such a record.

There is also that far more serious fact, a great dearth of Bible knowledge. Nothing will so quickly and effectually free the mind from every taint of superstition as a clear knowledge of God's word; for how can light and darkness dwell together? Ignorance of the Bible is so general among Roman Catholics in Italy that one could scarcely tell the truth without the appearance of exaggeration. Probably not one in ten thousand really reads the Bible, and the great majority have never even seen it. Besides all this, it cannot be denied that the priests, as a rule, not only do nothing to enlighten the people with reference to these superstitious fears and beliefs, but that they too often encourage their flock in them. The power and wealth of the priests in Italy has generally been in exact proportion to the ignorance and superstition of the people.

One of the best Italian dictionaries defines superstition as

"a religious sentiment which springs from ignorance or fear." This is the chronic condition of multitudes in this land, quite the opposite of what God desires, who will have all men come unto the knowledge of the truth, and who tells us that perfect love casteth out fear. Webster, in defining superstition, says: "Literally, a standing still over something amazing; hence, an excessive reverence or fear of that which is unknown or mysterious . . . extreme and unnecessary scruples in the observance of religious rites not commanded. . . Belief in the direct agency of superior powers, in certain extraordinary or singular events, or in magic, omens, or prognostics."

Says the author of "Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome," p. 134:

> One unchristian peculiarity of popular Romanism is that it is fast ceasing to be a faith; and is degenerating into a mere superstition. This word does not mean, as people commonly fancy, over-readiness to swallow marvels. That is credulity, about which we are not now concerned. But superstition means that form of religion in which fear is stronger than love and trust. Its leading characteristic is the belief that the powers above man are unfriendly, jealous, and vindictive; or at best stern and relentless; and that they must be baffled by mechanical amulets and magical charms, or bought off by being gratified with the sight of those sufferings which they delight to inflict. That is the sentiment which is at the root of African fetichism and of Hindoo fakirism alike. And now it has got almost entire possession of Romanism. Already it has been shown how the Father and Christ are avoided and shrunk from, as stern and pitiless judges, and Mary turned to as the one merciful hope for sinners; and also how God is supposed to pursue with hideous tortures (in purgatory) the souls of even the holy dead. These ghastly distortions of Christianity are not to be found in the Missal at all, and scarcely a trace of them in the Breviary, but they form a very large part, often the larger part, of the popular creed in Roman Catholic countries now.

This witness is true, as every one who has labored in strictly Roman Catholic countries can testify.

To give a detailed account of the superstitions which have

prevailed in this country would require volumes; a brief statement, however, may prove interesting and suggestive.

How many millions have lived and died slaves to the fiction that the pope actually has in his possession the keys of heaven and hell, and that when he shuts, none can open; and when he opens, none can shut! This being the case, nothing was so much dreaded as this fearful papal excommunication. Even kings and princes trembled in view of it, and not unfrequently were willing to undergo the most humiliating and degrading penance in order to prevent or remove it. Who does not call to mind the case of Henry IV., who stood three days before the pope's palace bareheaded, barefooted, and thinly clad in the dead of winter? Among the masses of the people, this excommunication was often feared more than death itself, for besides the spiritual consequences, the most fearful temporal results generally followed, an excommunicated man being completely boycotted. What a weapon, and with what a cruel hand it has been wielded by the popes and prelates of the Church of Rome! (Rev. 13 : 17.)

Is there a ruler on earth to-day who fears the spiritual consequences of the pope's malediction or excommunication? This Satanic fiction, this travesty of Christ's words to Peter (Matt. 16 : 19), is fast losing its hold upon Italians.

A belief in the power of charms is almost universal. These charms are of various kinds, and are usually kept in the house or worn on the person, always with the idea of warding off some evil, or as the medium of good fortune. It is no exaggeration to say that they may be counted by the million. Let it be particularly borne in mind that these objects have no value whatever unless they have been recognized and blessed by a priest. A bishop is better than a priest, a cardinal than a bishop, and the pope, of course, is above them all.

Bushels and bushels of objects are carried to the Vatican every year to receive the pope's blessing, and not a few of

these come from America. A Baptist lady once showed me a rosary which she had brought all the way to Rome, at the express request of her Irish servant girl, that it might touch the person of "His Holiness" and "receive the Holy Father's blessing." Let each decide for himself whether she did right. Many of these objects the pope never touches or even sees, for it is just as easy to make the sign of the cross over ten thousand as over one. The ambition to carry back something very special has unfortunately made a good many American Protestants abettors of this superstition. The number of these objects in American homes would probably be a surprise to us all.

The first time my attention was especially called to this question of charms was in Naples, during the bathing season. I noticed that many of the bathers wore a string around the neck, to which was attached a sort of bag, about the size of a half-dollar. I inquired of a Neapolitan gentleman, a friend of mine, what it meant.

"That is a charm," he replied, "and these people have it on now to keep them from drowning."

"But do they really believe that it has this power?" I asked in surprise.

"Certainly they do. I wore one all my life till a few years ago, and I had implicit faith in its virtue to ward off evil. But now I have learned better."

As this gentleman had recently become something of a Bible student, it was easy to account for this change in his views.

This incident occurred several years ago, and since then I have been amazed to find how many people in Italy still wear charms about their neck concealed under the clothing, or keep them in their shops, houses, or fields. Those worn around the neck are usually of brass or copper, and contain the image of the Virgin or of some other saint. Sometimes a simple cross is set up in a field, which the poor peasants con-

fidently believe will prevent drought and disaster. If the harvest fails, the priest tells them that it was not in consequence of any lack of virtue in the cross, but because of their want of faith in it.

On August 6, 1889, the carabineers finally succeeded, with the aid of their rifles, in putting an end to the career of a noted brigand who had long been the terror of the country and the desperation of the police. In the safest part of his pocket-book they found two pieces of paper carefully folded and preserved, each containing a prayer, which the owner had probably recited thousands of times, judging from the soiled and worn condition of the paper. One was called: "The true letter of Jesus Christ, sent by the hand of the Guardian Angel and found at the foot of a Crucifix, where a little girl was standing who had not spoken for seven years, and immediately she spoke and said three times, 'Jesus and Mary.'" This was considered proof sufficient that the letter was genuine, and doubtless thousands of copies were sold to the people. The other paper was entitled: "Glorious apparition of Mary, Most Holy, of Montenero, for the relief of the devout." Here we find superstition and brigandage going hand in hand. This has been a very common thing in Italy.

Scipio Sighele, who is forming a criminal museum, in commenting on the above case, says: "I do not know if the Madonna will hear him (the brigand) now that he is dead and will call him to paradise from hell, where logically he ought to have gone. Certainly while he was alive one might have been tempted to believe that she aided him very effectually, since he was able to continue his robbery for many years."

There is one special charm in Italy on which the Carmelite monks virtually have a patent. The exclusive right to this charm was given to them, it is claimed, by the Virgin herself, who appeared to one of their order on Mount Carmel many centuries ago. Their blessing alone avails to give it virtue,

and they alone have the right to sell it to the people. These monks have managed to gain a great name for their charm, so that it is much sought after and brings them a handsome revenue.

This charm consists of two small pieces of stuff bearing the image and device of the Virgin, and it is claimed that those who wear it are exempt from almost every evil that can be imagined, and have a share in all good works done throughout the whole church. He who puts it on in faith when dying cannot go to hell. Besides, it is said that Mary promised Pope John XXII. that she would go herself every Saturday to purgatory, take out any wearers of this charm, who, having died in the previous week might be there, and bring them straight to heaven. The exact words of the vision are as follows: "*Ego Mater gratiose descendam sabbato post eorum abitum, et quos in purgatorio invenero liberabo, et ad montem sanctum vitæ alternæ perducam.*" [1] This fact is vouched for by Popes John XXII., Alexander V., Clement VII., Pius V., Gregory XIII., and Paul V.[2] No wonder the charm is so sought after by the people! And yet what a fearful and ruinous superstition it is!

One summer, while stopping in a mountain town of Tuscany, meeting a little boy by the roadside I entered into conversation with him. His shirt collar being unbuttoned, I at once discovered that he was wearing a charm. "What is that you have on your neck?" I inquired.

"It is a charm," he replied very innocently.

"A charm!" I repeated; "and what is a charm?"

"Something to help us," he answered; and he seemed to wonder at my ignorance.

"But how does this help you?" I asked.

"It keeps me from falling down," he replied without hesitation, and with evident confidence.

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[1] Guglielmi, "*Recueil des Scapulaires*," p. 143, Paris, 1862

[2] "Glories of Mary," p. 208.

"Do you really believe that this little piece of brass will keep you from falling down" I inquired in a tone of incredulous surprise.

"Well, I don't know," said the little fellow, somewhat confused; "but I haven't fallen down since I put it on."

Of course, when he sold that charm to that little mountain lad, the priest knew very well that he could not please him better than by giving him something to prevent his falling. Should he happen to fall some day and break an arm or a leg, it could easily be explained on the ground of his lack of faith, or neglect of mass or confession by some member of his family, or perhaps the saint, whose image the charm bears, wanted to teach him a much needed lesson.

A little Irish girl in Chicago, when asked what she was wearing on her neck, replied: "It is a piece of flannel which has been blessed by the pope, and inside the little bag is an image of the Virgin. I wear it as a charm to keep me from getting hurt. The sister told me that some time ago a little boy fell into the water and would have been drowned but for his charm, which caught on to a tree and saved his life, and she said it would do the same for us."

Hundreds of thousands of Catholic children in America are probably wearing these charms to-day.

Charms are used for every possible purpose in Italy; to prevent accidents, to ward off danger and disease, to keep away evil spirits and witches, to bring customers to one's shop, or a harvest to one's field. A friend of mine, who lived several years in Naples, told me that it was a very common thing among the women of that city to keep in their houses a charm which was supposed to have peculiar virtue in time of child-birth. He had one in his possession, a piece of flannel several inches square, which was given him by a woman whose "refuge of lies" had been swept away by the light of God's word, which for the first time in her life she had been studying.

In some sections of the country moles are very abundant and troublesome. When the peasants find that their own efforts to get rid of these moles are unavailing, they at last apply to the priest to use his magic powers, which they superstitiously believe are unfailing in their efficacy. They would apply sooner, but as the priest always requires a fee for the exercise of his arts, the poor peasant will only have recourse to him as a last resort. On reaching the field, the priest will take his stand as near the center as possible, the peasant and his family meanwhile gathering about him. Then they all kneel together and the priest offers his prayer of exorcism. Rising from his knees, he sprinkles the field with holy water and makes the sign of the cross three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He then takes his fee and returns to the monastery. If the moles happen to disappear he gets all the credit; but if they refuse to budge, it is because the peasant and his family did not have sufficient faith, or were unworthy of the blessing, and the same ceremony must be repeated again, with an additional fee, of course.

Once a peasant called at the monastery to ask one of the monks to come and drive the moles from his field; but as several of the monks were away, and all the others were so occupied that they could not go, one of them, not wishing to lose the case or disappoint the peasant, told him that they could do it just as well in the monastery, without going in person to the field. "But," added the monk, "while I am doing my part here, you must at the same hour be on your knees in your field praying." The peasant returned to his home and at the appointed day and hour gathered his family together in the midst of the infected district. Devoutly and seriously they recited their prayers and the words of exorcism prescribed by the church for such occasions.

Some weeks afterward he went down to the monastery and calling for the monk informed him of the complete success

of their united efforts, and in token of his gratitude presented his spiritual father with several gallons of his best wine, and other acceptable products of the farm. The monk received them graciously and gratefully, but on entering the monastery he said to his brother monks, as one present related to me: "To tell you the truth, I forgot all about that poor fellow's field until he called for me to-day. But it is all right; the moles are gone, he is happy, and I have this nice present!" In this way the monks really trade upon the superstition and the credulity of the peasants.

A sensible man in Rome surprised me very much one day by informing me that he knew a town where nearly all the babies were deformed, and that everybody said it was the work of witches who came into the houses at night through the key-holes, and in some way gave the little babies a twist and left them deformed. When I demurred he insisted that it was an undeniable fact.

A woman was one day bemoaning to me the fact that she had so little hair, and said sadly: "I was sitting one morning before my door combing my long beautiful hair, when an old woman came along and began to stroke it. A friend of mine who was standing by seeing her, called out, 'Let that hair alone.' The old witch passed on, but it was too late, for the evil had been done, and my hair began at once to fall out. You see for yourself that now I have almost no hair at all. Ah, how many tears I have shed since that day!"

A man in the neighborhood of Florence assured me that a conjurer or charm doctor had greatly benefited his daughter, who had for a long time been in delicate health.

The exorcism of evil spirits is an art which many priests profess to practise, though a special permit from the Vatican is required to enter this sphere. A "Compendium of the Art of Exorcism," a book of nearly five hundred pages, by G. Menghi, a priest, was published in Venice some years

ago, with the special permission and approval of the authorities of the church. In this book we learn that when every other magical art has been tried in vain, there is still one unfailing remedy, which must be adopted however, only as a last resort, viz, excommunication, this being a weapon which the devil himself cannot resist. How strange that in order to gain influence over the people, and make them stand in mortal dread of excommunication, the author of this book and those who gave it their approval and blessing, have tacitly confessed that the devil is in the Church of Rome, for otherwise how could he be excommunicated! But so determined are the priests of Italy to dominate the minds and consciences of the people that they do not stop short of anything that will aid them in their purpose.

In a certain town of Northern Italy the people are very much devoted to St. Gothard. He is said to be a son of the duke of Ferrara, but this is impossible, for according to strict chronology St. Gothard would then be one hundred and sixteen years older than his father. But such inconsistencies count for very little in this country, where every possible absurdity has been palmed off on the people as truth. Every year, on St. Gothard's Day, the priests of the above-named village manufacture a number of heads and hands and feet out of dough and bake them. They are then carried to the church and blessed as members of the body of St. Gothard, after which they are sold one by one to the people, who keep them in their houses as medicine. On the same day ribbons are sold, which the priests tell the people have been blessed by the saint. They are kept as a cure for headache, being bound around the head for this purpose.

In Naples many persons, when they are sick or threatened with some special danger, will make a vow to the Virgin, promising that if she will heal them or save them from the impending evil, they will perform some special religious act. When the vow is fulfilled, in order to render more cer-

tain the favor and blessing of the Virgin, the person who made the vow buys a new garment, carries it to the church that it may be blessed by the priest, who of course requires a fee, and then wears it till it is no longer possible to make it hang together. If a woman is too poor to buy a dress, an apron will answer the same purpose; but if she cannot afford this, then she fully expects some evil to befall her.

The familiar spirit of Naples, who is said to visit all houses, when he brings good fortune appears as a small child dressed in white; but when he comes clothed in a red dress evil fortune is sure to follow. Not a few people in Naples declare that they have seen him.

There is a strange superstition that when a woman desires to get rid of her rival, she must take a fresh lemon and stick into it a number of pins in the shape of a person; after which she wraps a piece of her rival's dress around the lemon and throws them all together into a well.

I am told that there is a large house in the very center of Naples which is never rented because the people say it has been inhabited by spirits for twenty years.

If a Neapolitan girl is very anxious to marry, and no lover has yet appeared, she must go on her balcony at midnight during nine consecutive nights, and pray to St. John for a lover. If she has the courage to do this, on the ninth night, while she is praying, she will see a great beam of fire stretching across the heavens, on which Salome, the daughter of Herodias, is dancing. At the same time she will hear a voice pronounce the name of her future husband. Sometimes, instead of to St. John, a girl will pray to St. Pasquale, and this is the prayer she is to make each night: "O blessed St. Pasquale, send me a husband, send me a husband—handsome, rosy, and round, exactly like you, O blessed St. Pasquale."

There are innumerable superstitions connected with the lottery in Italy, and priests, cardinals, and popes have en-

couraged the people in them, because of the handsome revenue accruing therefrom. The people are always on the lookout for fortunate numbers with which to play, the methods employed for securing these numbers being often very curious and even shocking. A book written for this special purpose, called the "Dream Book," has had an immense sale, though it is one mass of nonsense and absurdities. Charles Dickens tells of an execution he witnessed in Rome in 1845, and to his horror he learned that the men who had crowded about the headless body were lottery speculators. He said:

> Nobody cared or was at all affected. There was no manifestation of disgust, or pity, or indignation, or sorrow. My empty pockets were tried several times in the crowd immediately below the scaffold, as the corpse was being put into the coffin. It was an ugly, filthy, careless, sickening spectacle, meaning nothing but butchery beyond the momentary interest to the one wretched actor. Yes! Such a sight has one meaning and one warning. Let me not forget it. The speculators in the lottery station themselves at favorable points for counting the gouts of blood that spurt out here and there, and buy that number. It is pretty sure to have a run upon it.

A lady missionary in Chili tells of seeing a row of candles burning in the street at the base of a large tree. On inquiring she found that a woman had recently been killed at that spot, and the candles were to light her soul through purgatory.

Another deep-rooted and almost universal superstition in Italy, sanctioned and encouraged by the entire hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, is a belief in the magic power abiding in the so-called holy water and holy oil. At the door of every church there is a font containing this water, and all who enter are expected to dip the finger into it and make the sign of the cross on the forehead as a necessary preparation for the service which is to follow. The people sometimes bring little bottles and carry a few drops of this

water to their homes to drive away evil spirits and to ward off evils of all kinds.

The yearly sprinkling of the houses of the faithful with the holy water is a most important ceremony, and while some have no confidence whatever in it, and either politely excuse themselves when the priest appears at the door, or allow him to go through the meaningless ceremony simply to avoid trouble and criticism, others have entire faith in its efficacy, and would live under a cloud should the priest fail to appear, or for any cause refuse to perform the ceremony.

When holy water is needed, a vessel is brought to the priest filled with the ordinary liquid, and standing over it he says :

I exorcise thee, thou creature of water, in the name of God the Father (here he makes the sign of the cross) Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ (sign) his Son, and the might of the Holy (sign) Spirit that thou be conjured water (*aqua exorizata*) for putting to flight all the power of the enemy, and that thou avail to root out and banish the enemy himself with his apostate angels through the might of the same, our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Amen.

After this the priest repeats the following prayer :

O God, who for the salvation of mankind, hast mystically veiled, under the substance of water, even the greatest sacraments, mercifully hear our supplications, and infuse into this element, prepared by diverse conjurings, the might of thy bene- (sign) diction ; that this, thy creature, ministering to thy mysteries, be endued with the efficacy of divine grace for the driving away of devils and the expelling of diseases, that in the houses of resorts of the faithful whatever shall be sprinkled with this water may be exempt from all uncleanness, and freed from everything that can hurt. Let no pestilent spirit, no blighting air settle there (*i. e.*, where the holy water is sprinkled), let all snares of the lurking enemy depart ; and whatever there be that is spitefully plotting either against the safety or the repose of its inhabitants, let the same flee away by the sprinkling of this water.

Who can blame Roman Catholics for crossing themselves with holy water and for keeping it in their houses so long as they believe the contents of this prayer?

Marsilius Columna,[1] Archbishop of Salerno, attributes to the use of holy water seven spiritual virtues: 1. To frighten away devils; 2. to remit venial sins; 3. to cure distractions; 4. to elevate the mind; 5. to dispose it to devotion; 6. to obtain grace; 7. to prepare for the sacrament. Besides this, it has power 1. To cure barrenness; 2. to multiply goods; 3. to procure health; 4. to purge the air from pestilential vapors.

Any parish priest on any morning of the year may perform the ceremonies and incantations by which the water is rendered holy and endued with magical powers; but not so in the case of the oil, which is said to have the further virtue of being able to cast out sin and prepare the soul for the presence of God. This oil can only be blessed once a year, and by a bishop or some one above him in office. This elaborate ceremony, which never lasts less than four hours, is always performed on Holy Thursday. With great pomp the bishop enters the cathedral, accompanied by twenty-four priests, twelve deacons, and six sub-deacons, each wearing his official robes, which glisten and sparkle with tinsel of silver and gold, having been specially adorned and beautified for the occasion.

I must confess frankly that these elaborate ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church have no power to produce feelings of reverence in my heart, because I have become fully convinced that as a rule they are a mere performance, and as such an abomination in the sight of God. Rather let me go into some miserable hovel and bow by the bedside of a poor sufferer who finds constant strength and joy in the study of God's word, who in the midst of the greatest sufferings can say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," who endures as seeing him who is invisible! There the deepest feelings of reverence and adoration are excited within me, for that mean hovel becomes a true Bethel, the very antechamber of the heavenly courts.

[1] "*Hydragiolog.*" S III., C II., p. 281, etc., Rome, 1686.

When the bishop has completed his long and tedious performance, his cask of oil is then ready for use, and he sells it by the bottle to the priests of his diocese. The priests use this oil to anoint children at baptism, and to anoint the sick just before death, and the bishops use it at the ordination of a priest. Alas, that millions in Italy still cling to the dreadful superstition that without this oil, *i. e.*, without extreme unction, the soul can have no assurance of entering heaven! Thousands who no longer believe in the efficacy of the holy oil to cleanse from sin and fit one for the presence of the Holy God, allow their loved ones to receive extreme unction in order to avoid criticism, and because without it the Catholic Church refuses an honorable burial, which in many cases would prove a social disgrace.

Oh, how often the missionary is reminded of the sad fact that men fear each other and the uncertainties and the possible reverses of social life more than they fear God and the fearful realities of eternity. Many do not hesitate to say that we are right; that they like our doctrines; that they are pleased to hear us when they can conveniently do so; but that a public profession of our faith would be impossible for social and material reasons. A man once said to me:

"No, no; I could not do that, for it would too closely identify me with you. A man cannot afford to have very decided convictions. In my business I am dependent on all parties. To me all religions are equally good."

And yet this man did not hesitate to laugh at many of the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome. He ridiculed in private what he professed to believe in public, and this had destroyed in him almost every trace of real religious sentiment and made him an easy prey to hypocrisy.

Hundreds of thousands of mothers in Italy are painfully superstitious about the baptism of their children, and well they might be if the doctrine of Romanism on this subject were true. But why continue the sad and almost endless

story? Gradually the people are breaking away from these debasing and destructive superstitions. Not a few have entirely thrown off the shackles, and even millions are slowly struggling into the light. May the day of their complete emancipation hasten its dawning!

CHAPTER XXII

TESTIMONY OF NOTED AUTHORS

THOUSANDS of foreigners visit Italy every year. Many of these, for the first time, have their eyes opened to the real condition of Romanism in this country, and they go away surprised, disgusted, and deeply grieved. Many have not hesitated to say that the so-called Christianity of Rome is nothing more nor less than baptized paganism. Scores of such statements might be selected from books, magazines, and newspapers. Charles Dickens visited Italy in 1845, and afterwards gave the world his "Pictures from Italy." Though he says in the preface to this book: "I hope I am not likely to be misunderstood by professors of the Roman Catholic faith, on account of anything contained in these pages," yet honesty compels him to say some hard things—things, however, for which Romanism is responsible, and which seem to be the inevitable outcome of the system when left long enough to itself. On page 531 we read:

The scene in all the churches is the strangest possible. The same monotonous, heartless, drowsy chanting, always going on; the same dark building, darker from the brightness of the street without; the same lamps dimly burning; the selfsame people kneeling here and there; turned toward you from one altar to another, the same priest's back, with the same large cross embroidered on it; however different in size, in shape, in wealth, in architecture, this church is from that, it is the same thing still. There are the same dirty beggars stopping in their muttered prayers to beg; . . the same odd mixture of respect and indecorum, faith and phlegm; kneeling on the stones and spitting on them, loudly; getting up from prayers to beg a little, or to pursue some other worldly matter; and then kneeling down again to resume the contrite supplication at the point where it was interrupted. In one church a kneeling lady got up from her prayer for a moment, to offer us her card as a

teacher of music; and in another, a sedate gentleman with a very thick walking staff, arose from his devotions to belabor his dog whose yelps and howls resounded through the church as his master quietly relapsed into his former train of meditation, nevertheless keeping his eye upon the dog at the same time. Above all, there is always a receptacle for the contributions of the faithful, in some form or another.

The above is an exact description of what I have seen many times, and of what every one can see daily in the churches of this land. The number and variety of contribution boxes is a very noticeable fact, and the methods by which the priests seek to have them filled are more noticeable still, and to my mind constitute one of the very sad features of Romanism.

After speaking of the ceremonies of Holy Week, as "most tedious and wearisome," and telling us that the pope and his attendants were "often weary and counting the minutes," he gives us a very striking description of the pope's "washing the feet of thirteen men, representing the twelve apostles and Judas Iscariot." How can one read Charles Dickens' account of this scene and not feel a deep revulsion from the entire proceeding and that the whole affair is a solemn farce, a mere travesty of the original? He says:

The place in which this pious office is performed is one of the chapels of St. Peter's, which is gayly decorated for the occasion; the thirteen sitting "all of a row" on a very high bench, and looking particularly uncomfortable, with the eyes of heaven knows how many English, French, Americans, Swiss, Germans, Russians, Swedes, Norwegians, and other foreigners, nailed to their faces all the time. They are robed in white, and on their heads they wear a stiff, white cap, like a large English porter-pot without a handle. Each carries in his hand a nosegay of the size of a fine cauliflower, and two of them, on this occasion, wore spectacles; which, remembering the characters they sustained, I thought a droll appendage to their costume. There was a great eye to character. St. John was represented by a good-looking young man; St. Peter by a grave-looking old gentleman, with a flowing brown beard, and Judas Iscariot by such an enormous hypocrite (I could not make out though whether the expression of his face was real or assumed) that if he had

acted the part of the death and had gone away and hanged himself, he would have left nothing to be desired.

After speaking of the great crowd, the heat, the confusion, etc., he continues:

The apostles and Judas appearing on the platform, after much expectation, were marshaled into line in front of the table with Peter at the top, and a good long stare was taken at them by the company, while twelve of them took a long smell at their nosegays, and Judas—moving his lips very obtrusively—engaged in inward prayer. Then the pope, clad in a scarlet robe, and wearing on his head a skull-cap of white satin, appeared in the midst of a crowd of cardinals and other dignitaries, and took in his hand a little golden ewer, from which he poured a little water over one of Peter's hands while one attendant held a golden basin, a second a fine cloth, a third Peter's nosegay, which was taken away from him during the operation. This his Holiness performed with considerable expedition on every man in the line (Judas, I observed, to be particularly overcome by his condescension); and then the whole thirteen sat down to dinner. Grace said by the pope; Peter in the chair. There was white wine and red wine, and the dinner looked very good. The courses appeared in portions, one for each apostle; and these being presented to the pope by cardinals upon their knees, were by him handed to the thirteen. The manner in which Judas grew more white-livered over his victuals and languished with his head on one side as if he had no appetite, defies all description. Peter was a good, sound old man, and went in, as the saying is, "to win," eating everything that was given him (he got the best, being first in the row), and saying nothing to anybody. The dishes appeared to be chiefly composed of fish and vegetables. The pope helped the thirteen to wine also, and during the whole dinner somebody read something aloud, out of a large book—the Bible, I presume—which nobody could hear, and to which nobody paid the least attention. The cardinals and other attendants smiled to each other, from time to time, as if the thing were a great farce, and if they thought so, there is little doubt they were perfectly right. His Holiness did what he had to do as a sensible man gets through a troublesome ceremony, and seemed very glad when it was all over.

This "great farce" is still acted every year in Rome. There is a ridiculous side to this and many other Romish ceremonies in Italy, and I am not surprised that some can see only this side; but to many a serious-minded Christian

man these things are painful in the extreme. Hypocrisy, infidelity, and the death of all genuine spiritual life are the natural fruit of such a system.

While in Rome Dickens visited several times the so-called Holy Stairs, which people can ascend only on their knees, and for which act of penance they are granted by the pope two hundred and fifty-two years less in purgatory. His description is both ludicrous and painful in the extreme, and yet it is exactly what I have myself seen many times. He gives his impressions in the following words :

> Of all the many spectacles of dangerous reliance on outward observances, in themselves mere empty forms, none struck me half so much as the Scala Santa, or Holy Staircase. . . I never in my life saw anything at once so ridiculous and so unpleasant as this sight—ridiculous in the absurd incidents inseparable from it, and unpleasant in its senseless and unmeaning degradation.

And yet this is done under the eye and with the sanction of the pope, who offers a great reward to all who perform this pious act. Other quotations might be given, but those already cited are sufficient to give one an idea of the impression made upon Charles Dickens by Romanism in Italy.

Mr. W. D. Howells spent several years in Italy, and has given us the result of his observations in "Venetian Life" and "Italian Journeys." Incidentally he has given us facts and impressions concerning Romanism which for this very reason are all the more valuable. In his "Italian Journeys," p. 37, he says :

> In our visits to the different churches in Ferrara we noticed devotion in classes of people who are devout nowhere else in Italy. Not only came solid-looking business men to say their prayers, but gay young dandies, who knelt and repeated their orisons and then rose and went seriously out. In Venice they would have posted themselves against a pillar, sucked the heads of their sticks, and made eyes at the young ladies kneeling near them. This degree of religion was all the more remarkable in Ferrara, because that city had been so many years under the pope, and his holi-

ness contrives commonly to prevent the appearance of religion in young men throughout his dominions.

It is a common saying in Italy that the nearer one comes to the Vatican the less religion and the more hypocrisy one finds. An Italian gentleman said to me some time ago: "Priestly rule is the greatest evil ever inflicted on the human conscience."

In speaking of an intelligent Italian sea-captain with whom he made a short journey, Mr. Howells writes:

Garibaldi was the beginning and the ending of his political faith, as he is with every enthusiastic Italian. The honest soul's conception of all concrete evil was brought forth in the words, of odd enough application. In Europe, and more particularly Italy, true men have suffered chiefly from this form of evil, and the captain evidently could conceive of no other cause of suffering anywhere. We were talking of the American war, and when the captain had asked the usual question, "When will this war ever end?" and I had responded as usual, "Ah! we must be patient," the captain gave a heavy sigh, and turning his head pensively aside, plucked his grapes from the cluster a moment in silence. Then he said: "You Americans are in the habit of attributing this war to slavery. The cause is not sufficient." I ventured to demur and explain. "No," said the captain, "the cause is not sufficient. We Italians know the only cause which could produce a war like this." I was naturally anxious to be instructed in the Italian theory, hoping it might be profounder than the English notion that we were fighting about tariffs. The captain frowned, looked at me carefully, and then said: "In this world there is but one cause of mischief—the Jesuits."

Who can wonder at this opinion after all that Italians have suffered through the influence and work of the Jesuits? Here they are intensely hated, but greatly feared, for Italians know that they have genius, talent, and power, and are utterly unscrupulous in their methods. All the more is this the case now that Leo XIII. has restored the privileges which the reigning pope took from them about a hundred years ago. Shortly after the New Orleans tragedy, an Italian said to me:

"You Americans are making a great to-do about those two or three miserable Italian brigands; but you had better be thinking about that army of respectable brigands, the Jesuits, who are seeking to invade and control your country."

Naples is pre-eminently a Roman Catholic city, and for centuries the priests have had almost unlimited power, but the present condition of the people is a sad commentary on the Romish system. For some years an excellent Protestant school has been struggling successfully with the problem of ignorance, dirt, superstition, and error. After a visit to this school, Mr. Howells writes:

> Of course these poor little people, picked up out of the vileness and ignorance of a city that had suffered for ages the most degrading oppression, are by no means regenerate yet, but there seems to be a great hope for them. Now, at least, they are taught a reasonable and logical morality, and who can tell what wonders the novel instruction may not work? They learn for the first time that it is a foolish shame to lie and cheat, and it would not be surprising if some of them were finally persuaded that honesty is the best policy—a maxim that few Italians believe. And here lies the trouble—in the unfathomable, disheartening duplicity of the race. The children are not quarrelsome, nor cruel, nor brutal; but the servile defect of falsehood, fixed by long generations of slavery in the Italians, is almost ineradicable. The fault is worse in Naples than elsewhere in Italy; but how bad it is everywhere, not merely travelers, but all residents in Italy must bear witness.

Speaking of the teaching in these schools, Mr. Howells says:

> The advance upon the old condition of things is incalculably great, for till the revolution under Garibaldi, in 1860, the schools of Naples were all in the hands of the priests or their creatures, and the little learning there imparted was as dangerous as it could be made. Now these schools are free, the children are honestly and thoroughly taught, and if they are not directly instructed in Protestantism, they are at least instructed to associate religion with morality, probably for the first time in their lives.

I am glad to testify that this school has continued its work during the twenty-eight years since Mr. Howells' visit, and

has proved a success beyond the most sanguine expectations of its founders, despite prejudice and priestly opposition. It is a satisfaction also to be able to say that its present financial prosperity is largely due to the generosity of a Baptist woman.

In speaking of Rome, Mr. Howells says: "The papal city makes her influence felt for shabbiness and uncleanliness wherever she can." Describing a visit to Saint Peter's Cathedral, he says:

Except for the singing of the pope's choir, which was angelically sweet and heavenly and far above all praise, the religious ceremonies affected me like all others of that faith, as tedious and empty. Each of the cardinals, as he entered the chapel, blew his sonorous nose, and was received standing by his brother prelates—a grotesque company of old-womanish old men in gaudy gowns. One of the last to come was Antonelli (the most influential of all the cardinals and a great favorite of Pius IX.), who has the very wickedest face in the world. He sat with his eyes fastened upon his book, but obviously open at every pore to all that went on about him. As he passed out he cast gleaming, terrible, sidelong looks upon the people, full of hate and guile. His Holiness had a cold, and his *recitative*, though full, was not smooth. He was all priest when, in the midst of his service, he hawked, and held his handkerchief up before his face, a little way off, and ruthlessly spat in it.

Speaking of a visit to the famous church built by Canova in his native village, Mr. Howells remarks:

It is a copy of the Pantheon, and it cannot help being beautiful and imposing, but it would be utterly out of place in any other than an Italian village. Here, however, it consorted well enough with the lingering qualities of the old pagan civilization still perceptible in Italy. A sense of that fact was so strong with us as we ascended the broad stairway leading up the slope from the village to the level on which the temple stands at the foot of the mountain, that we might well have believed we approached an altar devoted to the elder (or pagan) worship; . . and I remembered how Padre I—— had said to me in Venice, "*Our blessed saints are only the old gods baptized and christened anew!*"

Just this and nothing more, and hence in Romanism in Italy there is much more of paganism than of Christianity.

James Jackson Jarvis, in his "Italian Rambles," says:

> Here the essence of all religion seems to be a sort of fetich devotion to the public processions of the sacred images, gotten up on a Falstaff, ragged scale, which would excite a laugh as a pageant were it not for the religious motive at the bottom of the incongruous display. There is no mistaking the bigoted sincerity with which the peasantry take their part —men, women, and children—in the external forms of their church under the guidance of the lower clergy, who come from among them and are scarcely more enlightened. . . But the church, although nominally so strong in these mountain holds, is rapidly losing ground as an institution and in principle. It has so subordinated the spiritual elements of Christianity to the materialistic ritual, preferring show to substance, that the peasantry are beginning to weigh its claims in the same balances and judge them accordingly.

A missionary to China, who had spent some time in Italy, remarked: "Why, Romanism in some respects is worse than paganism, and Italy seems to be a harder and more hopeless field even than China."

But the gospel is God's power, and even fifteen centuries of Romanism must yield to it.

CHAPTER XXIII

"THE HOLY SHOP"

THIS expression is on the lips of multitudes in Italy, and is always applied to the Roman Catholic Church. Some use it to express the deepest scorn and contempt for the church and its ministers, while others utter it in a tone of evident disappointment and grief. In the original, "*La Santa Bottega*," it is a brief and effective way of declaring that the Church of Rome is simply a medium through which the priests, in the name and under the form of religion, seek to procure money from the people. I am persuaded that this is the candid opinion of the majority of Italians. In all my intercourse with the people, seldom have I found one who has not been ready to confess that the chief object of the priests is getting and not giving, for their conduct says plainly, "I seek not you but yours." Would that this accusation were false; but alas, it is only too true, as all who know the facts can testify.

It is a common saying that a priest will never do anything without a fee; but for plenty of money he will absolve the most incorrigible sinner on earth. The salary of most priests in Italy is small, and the deficit must be supplied by fees of various kinds. This, of course, exposes the priest to the constant temptation of encouraging the people in error and superstition. In many cases these fees amount to more than double the salary. It is well known that the priests are generally so bitter against missionaries and other evangelical workers because just in proportion as they succeed these fees diminish.

Not a few intelligent men in Italy would gladly see the people liberated from the semi-pagan state into which they

have fallen, and hence they believe that the government ought to make some special provision for the lower clergy, at the same time limiting their number to the actual necessities of the case, in order that thus they may be delivered from the constant temptation to trade upon the ignorance and fears of the masses. But whether this remedy would prove effectual is yet to be seen. It is really a question of character and not of salary, and as the priesthood in this country is a profession and not a calling, many well-to-do priests are as anxious as the poorest for every fee they can squeeze out of the people. How can one write upon such a subject without an aching heart? Surely here facts are stranger than fiction. Let us look into a few of these facts and perhaps they will help us to decide whether the spirit of Romanism is the Spirit of Christ.

The priest's fees begin when life begins. The Romish Church says that every child must be baptized before it is three days old, for without baptism none can be saved, and even a new-born babe may die. For a baptism a priest receives from one to ten dollars, no special sum being fixed by the church. As the baptism of children is almost universal in Italy, this means a very handsome annual income to the church.

At seven years of age the child is brought to the church and confirmed by the bishop. Instead of money the parents of the child bring a large wax candle, the price of these handsome candles varying from one to five dollars each. They are sometimes five or six feet long and two or three inches in diameter, and beautifully colored. They are placed before the altar and kept burning during the ceremony of confirmation, but of course a very small portion of the candle is consumed. These candles constitute the bishop's fee, and as he often confirms a hundred at a time, it is something not to be despised. When the ceremony is over the bishop sells his candles to the priests, at a reduction, of course, and the priests in turn trade them to the people.

No mother is allowed to enter a church for forty days after the birth of a child. At the close of that period she comes to the church for the ceremony of purification; nor does any mother ever come empty handed. The very poorest will bring a candle, though the money to pay for it has to be begged on the streets. The candle, after being lighted a few moments, becomes the property of the priest. Very few women would think of omitting this ceremony.

Marriage is another most fruitful source of revenue to the priests. For centuries this was entirely a church affair in Italy, and many volumes would not suffice to recount the abuses which resulted therefrom. What a mighty lever it proved in the hands of the priests for the accomplishment of their purposes! The regular marriage fee in this country is about seven dollars, four dollars for the parish priest, one dollar for his assistant, and fifty cents for the church sexton. Besides this a mass must always be paid for, which may cost from forty cents to two dollars. In the case of the rich, custom has made the fee much larger, though the poor often pay very much less. If a priest cannot get what he asks, he will take what he can get, for marriage is no longer a church, but a civil institution, and hence no one is obliged to go to the priest. The majority of women, however, still insist on going to the church. The fee for a runaway match is three times the ordinary one, and the ceremony cannot be performed without the special, written permission of the pope.

The laws of the Catholic Church forbid marriages between relatives, and yet almost any of these laws may be broken for a consideration. When relatives wish to marry they present their claims to the parish priest, and he procures a dispensation direct from Rome. The fee for this dispensation will vary according to the degree of relationship of the contracting parties and the amount of their worldly possessions.

It is commonly reported in Italy that when Prince Amadeo, the brother of King Humbert, wanted to marry his

niece, the pope granted him a dispensation, but not until the prince had accompanied his request with a check for five hundred thousand francs, or one hundred thousand dollars. A man may marry his brother's widow, but a very large fee is required. The same is also true of the sister of one's wife. The fee for the marriage of cousins is smaller, though first and second cousins pay much more than third, fourth, and fifth. A short while ago I learned from a young woman in a mountain village that her marriage had been indefinitely postponed because the parish priest had learned a few days before the ceremony was to have been performed that she and her lover were distantly related, about seventh cousins. "And now he declares," she said, "that he will not marry us without an additional fee of twelve francs (about two dollars and fifty cents). My lover says he will not pay it. I cannot imagine who told the priest that we were relatives. We had hoped to be married without his knowing anything about it." This young woman did not hesitate to accuse her priest of avarice, and she gave facts to prove what she said.

One day, in conversation with a man from a neighboring town, I related the above facts, and took occasion to remind him of the many inconsistencies of the Church of Rome. It is either right or wrong, I said, for relatives to marry. If it is right, then it is a very unworthy abuse of power on the part of the pope and the priests to make the contracting parties pay for it. If it is wrong, then the pope is guilty of a double sin before God. He gives his official sanction to what God has forbidden, and he deliberately sets aside the divine law for a money consideration.

"Let me tell you something which happened to me a few years ago," said the young man, lowering his voice to a sort of timid, confidential tone. "I was engaged to my fourth cousin, and when I went to the priest to arrange for the marriage he said that I must pay him thirty francs (six dollars). I refused to pay it. At last I decided to go down to Pistoia

and present my case directly to the bishop. On hearing my story, he advised me to go back and pay the priest his fee, and let him marry us. But I refused to do so. I told the bishop frankly that we had been living together for some months, and that the girl would soon be a mother, but rather than pay the thirty francs I would abandon her to her disgrace. As I was leaving the door the bishop called me back and offered to reduce the fee to sixteen francs, but I refused to accept his terms, and left the room. My friends at home begged me to pay the money and end my troubles; but I would not yield, for I did not feel that they had any right to make me pay for a dispensation. I was married by the mayor of the town, and the priest lost his fee."

Before the present government made marriage a civil institution the fees were much larger than at present, and the difficulties were far greater. When two persons wished to be married they went first to the parish priest to make known the fact. The priest then examined the church register to see if they had been duly baptized and confirmed, in which case he gave them a certificate to that effect, taking a fee for the same.

After having examined them in the catechism, he sent them to the office of the vicar that this certificate might be examined and other documents furnished. On the reception of these, the priest prepared the marriage banns, for which another fee was required. All this was necessary in order to procure a license, which called for another fee, larger than either of the others. With this license the parties proceeded to the church, where a long and tedious ceremony was performed, and another fee was demanded, besides money for a mass on behalf of the married couple. By this time many a poor man felt that he had really bought his wife, and not unfrequently she was treated accordingly.

To the great sorrow of the priests, nothing is required in Italy now except a civil license, and those who wish to avoid

the heavy church fees content themselves with a simple civil marriage. Most Italian women, however, are superstitious on this point, and would consider it rather hazardous to set forth on the matrimonial sea without the approval of the church and the blessing of the priest.

Catholic festivals, which are very numerous in this country, are another source of revenue to the priests. Every priest who takes part in a festival is paid a fixed sum, and gets a big dinner besides. At this dinner none but priests are present, and they eat and drink to their heart's content, as many as sixteen courses being sometimes served, besides from five to twenty glasses of wine for each one. Gluttony and drunkenness are very common on such occasions. A priest told me that one could scarcely credit what he had witnessed at these festival dinners. Besides the immoderate eating and drinking, the conversation is most unbecoming, often descending to the obscene and blasphemous. It is no uncommon thing for a confessor, while under the influence of wine, to entertain the company with a recital of his confessional experiences, his statements being received often with a roar of laughter.

The festival preacher, who is also present at the dinner, receives about two dollars and fifty cents for his sermon, and besides this, a dollar mass, which he can say at his leisure. Who can wonder that religion is despised and the church is called "The Holy Shop"?

At twelve years of age children take their first communion in the Roman Catholic Church, which gives the priest another opportunity for a fee. On such occasions confession to a priest is the most important part of a child's preparation. This confession is expected to include every sin of the entire life, and lest the child should not be able to recall everything the first time, the confession is repeated the second and the third time, beginning on Thursday and ending on Saturday. The communion takes place on the Sunday following, the girls being dressed always in white, often long white veils

being thrown over their heads, which gives them quite the appearance of little brides. Every child who takes communion is expected to bring a candle, the value of the candle ranging anywhere between forty cents and four dollars. Besides the candle, many of the children bring a fee for the parish priest, which, in the case of the rich, is sometimes rather handsome..

The first communion is given indiscriminately to all children of twelve years of age, regardless of character and real heart preparation. Sometimes they are sent for a few weeks to the monasteries and nunneries to be specially prepared for this important occasion; but a monk told me that, in his experience, he found that the boys generally went away worse than when they came, for they get behind the scenes and become too familiar with the real life and character of the monks.

Funerals are another prolific source of revenue for the priest. The very poor are never buried by the church, but are carried off in the night by the city hearse. "No fee, no funeral," is a well-known saying in this country. Funerals cost from twenty dollars up to any sum the rich are willing to spend. City funerals are sometimes very grand, this grandeur consisting in three things; a great church splendidly illuminated, with hundreds, and perhaps even thousands, of candles and lamps burning, an elaborate ritualistic service, and many priests and monks to accompany the corpse to the grave. Each priest has his regular fee. The candles become the property of the priest in whose church the funeral takes place, from the sale of which he sometimes realizes the handsome sum of one hundred dollars, or even more.

Besides this, priests are often employed to say a mass for a man's soul on the day of the funeral. In 1892 a rich man died in Florence, and besides the regular funeral expenses, which were very heavy, he had previously given orders that every priest in the city, about five hundred in number, should

say mass for his soul on the day of his burial, the fee for each mass being fixed at two dollars and fifty cents. Priests encourage the people to have pompous funerals, because thereby they reap a richer harvest of fees. A village woman told me that at the death of her son she had decided to have a very simple funeral in order to avoid the expense, but that her priest, taking advantage of the circumstances, worked upon her feelings and her pride and persuaded her to have quite an elaborate affair, and all because it put a handsome fee into his pocket.

An Italian, writing on this subject in 1865, says:

> In Rome one is morally bound to make a great funeral when a relative dies. The priests have learned all the ways of extracting money from the pockets of their parishioners. For the stubborn they have made a law, and it is the statute of the clergy, and on the strength of that law the tribunals condemn those who are not willing to have a funeral, or wish to have a very shabby one. For the devout they have left in the catechism the fifth commandment of the church, which says, "Remember to pay the tithes," and as there are no tithes properly so called in Rome, the priests say and teach that funerals are in the place of tithes. For those who are not very devout, and they are greatly in the majority, the priests have made it a point of honor to have a funeral of more or less magnificence. Woe to the family which undertakes simply to have a decent funeral! It will be said that they are people without heart and without honor, and that they have buried their dead like a dog! Hence, in order to avoid the criticism of the world, every one makes a special effort, and many contract debts in order to have a fine funeral.

The account given by the same writer of how the very poor, who could not by any possible means afford an expensive funeral, were buried in Rome before the middle of this century, is painful and harrowing in the extreme. First, the body was placed upon a bier and carried by two men, a priest going before them to a large hospital, which contained a general deposit for the dead. This was always after dark. When the distance was long and the weather bad, the men, including the priest, generally went into some wine shop to

rest and drink, while the body was left in the dark on the outside. Not unfrequently it was run against by a passing cart or carriage and knocked from the bier. When all who were to be buried that night were brought in, they were put in an open cart, one on top of the other, and carried thus to the graveyard, accompanied by two gravediggers, who went carelessly along singing obscene songs. On reaching the cemetery they were all thrown into the same grave, which was then covered with a great square stone. When these poor bodies had returned to mother earth, the grave was again ready for others like them. Alas that such methods should have been employed in order to force the people to have expensive funerals, which would put money into the pockets of the priests! And yet this is Romanism in Rome.

The "Index Prohibitory" of the Roman Catholic Church is a catalogue of books which the faithful are forbidden to read. The list is now a very long one, and among other things includes the Bible and all the works of Luther, besides everything written against the Church of Rome, and almost every book which is at all evangelical in tone. The original object of the Index was to keep the people in the dark; but besides this it seems that it is intended as a means of replenishing the treasury of the church. For two dollars and eighty cents the pope will grant a dispensation to read almost any book on the Index, even the Bible. During the days of the Inquisition, when it was worth a man's life in Rome to violate a papal decree, the church probably realized a handsome income from the sale of these dispensations; but it seems that at present their sale is confined mostly to a small number of priests. Among the people, those who are superstitious enough to stand in awe of this papal decree are generally too ignorant or indolent to care to read such books, and those who really desire to read them are intelligent and independent enough to do as they like without reference to the Index.

Assisting the dying, strange to say, is another prolific source of revenue to the priests. Most people in this country are afraid to die without extreme unction. Not unfrequently it happens that after extreme unction has been given the family request the priest to remain by the bedside of the dying one, to say prayers over him and to close his eyes for the long sleep. For this the charge is usually four dollars. Sometimes the priest and the family, as a priest himself informed me, will have quite a quarrel over the fee, and the result is that occasionally his original price is reduced.

A prominent Christian gentleman in America gave me the following: A lady in a Southern city had become enamored of the Catholic Church, and unknown to her husband frequently attended its services. Encouraged and abetted by the priest she was finally received into the communion, all the while keeping her husband in utter ignorance of what she had done. Some years after this, being very sick and supposing that she would die, she informed her husband of what she had done, and begged him to send for her priest. The dying woman told the priest that she wanted absolution and his priestly benediction. Seeing that he hesitated, the husband asked the priest if he could grant his wife's request. "Yes," said the priest, "I can give her absolution and a safe passport, but I shall need a thousand dollars in order to do it." For the sake of his dying but deluded wife the afflicted husband paid the money.

Then there is what is called the "three hours of agony." After the priest has administered extreme unction he is requested by the family to return to the church and remain on his knees repeating certain prayers for the dying one. For this he is paid sixty cents an hour. No priest will do this praying without his fee, and hence very few of the poor have it done. Who can read such things without sorrow of heart? These people who have been so deeply and darkly deceived, do they not deserve our sympathy and our prayers?

The blessing of crosses, crowns, crucifixes, medals, images, books of devotion, etc., is quite a business in Italy. The right of blessing these objects belongs exclusively to the pope, but he confers this privilege upon any confessor who asks for it and sends him seven francs, or about one dollar and forty cents. This right, however, must be renewed every seven years. If the confessor does not care to spend the money he writes and offers to say seven masses at one franc each, and as the pope has already received from two to five francs each for these masses, both gain by the operation. Out of this seven francs the confessor will probably realize several hundred, for every object which the people bring to him to have blessed means a fee. The ignorant and superstitious call on the priest to bless everything they have, their houses, their fields, their children, their food, their animals, but for each blessing a fee of twenty-five cents is charged.

All Catholic churches in this country have at least one wonder-working image or relic, through which and from which special blessings are conferred upon the faithful. But nothing can be done without the presence and prayers of the priest. The fee of the priest for these intercessions is from forty cents to one dollar. Thousands and thousands of mothers bring their children to receive the blessing of San Felice, the children's saint, but no mother would think of coming without some kind of a present for the priest, and the more valuable the present the greater will be the blessing. So the priests say, and thus many of the poor mothers believe.

The "Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament" is another source of income to the Church of Rome. In nearly all the churches an unusually large *ostia*, or consecrated wafer, is carefully preserved in a vase, kept for this purpose. The church says that this wafer is the actual Christ, "body, soul, and divinity." Two or three times a year this *ostia* is taken out of the vase and exposed on the altar, the object being to bring down some special blessing upon the people ; to heal

some sickness, to bring rain, to lessen the stay of souls in purgatory, to drive out heresy from the parish, especially Protestantism.

It generally remains exposed twelve hours a day for two or three days, and it is claimed that prayers and masses said before that altar during those days possess special virtue, and for this reason such masses are double price. The priest, who usually receives thirty, forty, or fifty cents for a mass, will charge a dollar on these days, and the preacher for the occasion receives about ten dollars for his three sermons, while the parish priest usually has from five to twenty dollars for his share. The entire expense connected with this exposition of the consecrated wafer is from forty to one hundred dollars, hence only the rich can afford it. Sometimes a society, or the entire parish, will unite in sharing the expense.

Another curious ceremony is the uncovering of the crucifix. In nearly every church there is a life-size crucifix, which is kept in a niche in the wall, with a curtain carefully drawn before it. Miraculous powers are said to abide in this crucifix, but they never manifest themselves except when it is uncovered. To withdraw that curtain, however, the priest charges from three to ten dollars. If some one is very ill, his relatives will sometimes go and have the crucifix uncovered. Or if the people are fearing a plague or some disaster to the harvest, they will hire the priest to uncover the crucifix. In the summer of 1892 this was done in a mountain town where I was stopping, because it was feared that the chestnut harvest might fail again. The "unjust steward" who had it done, a man intensely disliked in the community for his dishonesty and hypocrisy, was careful to wait till an unusually good harvest had become almost a certainty.

At another time, during a very long rainy season, a little town was threatened with a disastrous landslide, and the people began to say, "Let us have the crucifix uncovered," and called on the priest for this purpose.

"But," said the priest, "where is the money?"

"We will go about the town and take up a collection for the purpose," they replied.

"Well, when you bring me the money then I shall uncover the crucifix," replied the priest.

So they went off to work up the collection, and when they had done their best, the proceeds were brought to the church; but the priest flatly refused to accept such a small sum for such an important matter, and while they were haggling over the price, the rain ceased.

Every one knows that the Church of Rome has realized immense sums from the sale of "Indulgences," which at one time constituted a most important article in the ecclesiastical market. In 1846 the papal consul in Sicily published a list of seventy graces, which could be secured from the Roman papal court, with the price of each grace. In one case, the consul adds a footnote to say that he cannot give the exact price, because it will depend upon the reduction he can obtain in Rome. He also informs his readers that, in addition to the published price, postage will be added, "in proportion to the size of the documents and of the graces." This remarkable document closes as follows: "N. B. All requests must be accompanied by a proportionate deposit for the payment of the necessary expenses, and for every delay in the withdrawal of the graces obtained, a reasonable sum will be charged."

"Oh, sad! oh, selfish! oh, fatal policy!" exclaims the Nun of Kenmare, "which shields itself under the cloak of religion, but knows not true religion. Avarice and greed have been the ruin of the church in many lands, and will yet, if God forbids it not, be the ruin of the church in this country."

I notice in this list that the price for marrying one's first cousin is one hundred and eighty-two francs, or about thirty-six dollars. A note, however, explains that this price is only

for one whose property does not exceed four thousand six hundred francs, or about nine hundred dollars in value. For those whose property exceeds this sum, the price is left uncertain, which means, of course, that the consul will get just as much as he can. I find it stated in this same list that if a young lady is living in a small place where there are few young men, and she cannot find a suitable lover except among her relatives, she may marry a second or third cousin, but the papal dispensation will cost her three hundred and twelve francs, or about sixty-two dollars.

Surely it is not without reason that the people call the Roman Catholic Church "The Holy Shop."

CHAPTER XXIV

ROMANISM AND THE BIBLE

THE real animus of Romanism in Italy is perhaps seen better in its attitude toward the Bible than in anything else, and I do not hesitate to affirm that it is an attitude of persistent hostility. But, really, how could it be otherwise? The doctrines of Romanism and the doctrines of the Bible are quite antagonistic. Mass, the worship of the Virgin and other saints, the celibacy of the priests, the confessional, penance, purgatory, kneeling before images, and other doctrines and practices are either directly condemned in God's word or entirely out of harmony with its spirit. Experience has proved that Romanism and an open Bible cannot dwell together.

Many priests and others in America claim that Rome does not forbid the use of the Bible. Let us look briefly into the history of this subject, and with the facts in hand each reader may then judge for himself as to the spirit which Rome has manifested toward the word of God.

In the ninth century two Greek missionaries carried the gospel among the Slavs, and translated the Bible into their language. In 867 Pope Nicholas I. cited these missionaries to Rome to give an account of their conduct, and as an answer to their reasonable and convincing arguments in justification of the course they had pursued, the pope formally forbade the use of the Bible and the Liturgy in the language of the people. This prohibition was renewed in 879 by Pope John VIII. Later, Gregory VII., the great political and religious despot of his day, in a letter to the King of Bohemia, forbade the celebration of the divine offices in the vulgar

tongue. In 1229, the Council of Toulouse, under Gregory IX., issued the following decree :

Prohibemus etiam ne libros veteris et novi Testamenti laicis permittantur habere, nisi fortis psalterium aut breviarium pro Divinis Offici, ac horas Beatæ Virginis, aliquis ex devotione habere velit, sed ne præmissos libros habeant in vulgari traslatos.—We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old and the New Testaments, unless perhaps for devotion some one may desire to have the Psalter or Breviary for Divine Offices, but the aforementioned books they may not have translated into the vulgar tongues.

Here the Bible is forbidden entirely to the laity, and even the Psalter and Breviary can only be read in Latin.

The "Index of Prohibited Books," published March 24, 1564, with the sanction and approval of Pius IV., contained ten rules, the fourth of which reads as follows :

Since it is manifest by experience that if the Holy Bible in the vulgar tongue be suffered to be read everywhere without distinction, more evil than good arises, let the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor be abided by in this respect ; so that, after consulting with the parish priest or the confessor, they may grant permission to read translations of the Scriptures, made by Catholic writers, to those whom they understand to be able to receive no harm, but an increase of faith and piety, from such reading. But whosoever shall presume to read these Bibles, or have them in possession without such permission, shall not be capable of receiving absolution of their sins, unless they have first given up the Bibles to the Ordinary. Booksellers who shall sell or in any other way furnish Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any one not possessed of the license aforesaid, shall forfeit the price of the books, which is supposed to be applied by the bishop to pious uses, and shall be otherwise punished at the pleasure of said bishop, according to the degree of the offense. Moreover, Regulars may not read or purchase the same without license had from their superiors.

Here the reading of the Bible, though not positively forbidden, is granted only to those who have a special permit. How strange and unnatural this sounds in our ears ; to read God's word one must first procure the written permission of inquisitor or confessor ! We may well suppose that under

such circumstances the Bible was little read. Can we imagine an inquisitor putting a Bible into the hands of a man who declared himself perplexed and in doubt concerning certain teachings of the church, and who desired honestly to know what God's word had to say on these points. Rome does not say, "Search the Scriptures," but "Obey the Church."

Later Clement VIII., in commenting on this fourth rule of Pius IV., declares that the order and custom of the Holy Inquisition have taken away from bishops and superiors all power to grant any such licenses, which rule applies not only to the Bible itself, but to compendiums, summaries, or extracts of any kind from the Bible. In 1622 Gregory XV. declared that all the licenses granted by his predecessor were revoked. In 1631 Urban VIII. ordered the bishops and inquisitors to burn at once all prohibited books which come into their possession, which, of course, included the Bible.

In 1704 an "*Index Expurgatorius*" was published in Rome by order of Pope Innocent XI., which seems to have been directed especially against the Bible, which is referred to not less than fifteen times, each time, of course, being condemned. The following are some of the references, which speak for themselves:

Page 30. All Bibles published by heretics. Bibles written in any vulgar tongue.
Page 94. Gospel narratives, and the sermons of the New Testament.
Page 177. Passages taken from nearly every chapter of the New Testament, as well as many from the Old Testament.
Page 258. Extracts from the Bible, and everything which treats of the excellence, the dignity, the authority, etc., of the Holy Scriptures.
Page 269. Summaries of the Bible.
Page 272. The Tables of the two Testaments.

These are all condemned, no Catholic being allowed to read them.

The famous papal bull, "*Unigenitus*," of Clement XI., in

1713, condemns the following Propositions of Quesnal, concerning the reading of the Bible, calling them "false, scandalous, pernicious, seditious, impious, blasphemous, and heretical."

79. It is useful and necessary at all times, in all places, and for all kinds of people, to study and learn the spirit, holiness, and mysteries of the sacred Scripture.

80. The reading of Holy Scripture is for all.

82. The Lord's Day ought to be hallowed by Christians with pious reading, and above all by Holy Scripture. It is dangerous to attempt dissuading Christians from this reading.

84. To take the New Testament out of the hands of Christians, or to keep it shut against them, by taking away the means of understanding it, is to close Christ's mouth to them.

85. To forbid Christians the reading of Holy Scripture, especially of the Gospels, is to forbid the use of light to the children of light, and make them undergo a sort of excommunication.

Though these propositions seem eminently proper and useful, and in perfect accord with the spirit and teaching of the Saviour, yet an infallible pope, in an official bull, addressed to the entire Church of Rome, calls them "false, scandalous, pernicious, seditious, impious, blasphemous, and heretical."

In the eighteenth century Bishop Ricci, of Pistoia, attempted a very cautious reform in his diocese. For this purpose he called together a synod in 1786, before which he expressed the desire that the people should read the Bible, and that the public prayers should be recited in the Italian language, so that the people might know what they were saying when they prayed. His conduct was highly displeasing to the Roman Court, and he was tried and condemned and compelled to recant, and on August 28, 1794, Pope Pius VI. published a bull, in which he condemned the doctrine of the synod as "rash, offensive to pious ears, and injurious to the Church."

A Polish Jesuit, under the direction of his archbishop,

translated the Bible into the Polish language, which translation was finally approved by Clement VIII. and Gregory XIII. Later, another infallible pope condemned the Catholic translation, which had become altogether too popular with the people, who have always welcomed the Bible when they had a fair chance. Pius VII., on hearing that the archbishop of Niesen was exhorting and encouraging the people to read the Bible, sent an apostolical brief to the archbishop, June 29, 1816, reproving him sharply for his conduct, declaring, at the same time, that the version of the Bible in the vulgar tongue is "the most malignant of all inventions, a pest, the destruction of the faith, the greatest danger to souls . . . a new kind of tares sown by the enemy, an impious conspiracy of innovators, the ruin of our holy religion."

Let the reader bear in mind that this is not a Protestant Bible which the pope is condemning in this strange, strong language, but a Catholic edition, translated by a Jesuit, under the direction of an archbishop, and approved by two popes. But this Bible had become too popular, and the Roman Curia knew full well what the result would be, should it find an entrance into the homes and the hearts of the people at large. When nobody cares for the Bible, then Rome too is silent.

A little later, on September 23, 1816, this same Pope Pius VII., addressed an apostolical brief to the archbishop of Mohilew, who had welcomed to his diocese Bibles of the Bible Society, in which he says:

> We were greatly and profoundly grieved on becoming aware of the disastrous project, hitherto unknown, of disseminating everywhere the Bible in the vulgar tongues . . . but our sorrow was infinitely greater on seeing certain letters written in the name of your Fraternity, in which the people committed to your care are exhorted to buy these same Bibles, to accept them willingly if offered gratuitously, and to study them with attention and assiduity. Certainly nothing more painful could befall us than to see you become a stone of stumbling, you who ought to have asked for grace to show to others the way of righteousness.

When Martini, archbishop of Florence, had completed his translation of the Bible into the Italian language, with extensive notes on the same, Pope Pius VI., on April 16, 1778, wrote him a letter, praising his work, published in twenty-three volumes, though he confesses that he has not yet read it. A few years later this same pope condemned the use of the Bible in the vulgar tongue.

On January 17, 1820, the Congregation of the Index, condemned Martini's New Testament, published at Leghorn without notes to render it less expensive. Leo XII., in an encyclical dated May 3, 1824, addresses the Latin bishops thus :

> We also, venerable brothers, in conformity with our apostolic duty, exhort you to turn away your flocks from these poisonous pastures (of Bibles in the vernacular), reprove, intreat, be instant in season and out of season, in all patience and doctrine, that the faithful committed to you be persuaded that if the sacred Scriptures be everywhere indiscriminately published, more evil than advantage will arise thence, because of the rashness of men.

Hon. Francis Scott, in a small pamphlet called "Letters from a Layman," page 38, published in 1868 (Rivingtons, London), referring to this encyclical of Leo XII. says :

> Twenty-seven Irish archbishops and bishops commended these infallible instructions of the Holy Father, "which prohibit the perusal of the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue without the sanction of the competent authorities," to the attention of the faithful as "replete with truth and wisdom"; adding "Such books have been and ever will be execrated by the Catholic Church; hence she has frequently ordered them to be committed to the flames." These instructions were directed to be "read at time of mass to the faithful by the clergy on successive Sundays." Among those who signed the above were Archbishops Murray and Doyle. They stated, before a committee of the House of Lords, that they had been educated, one in Spain and the other in Portugal, and that neither of them had ever seen a Spanish or Portuguese Bible; one had heard of the existence of one, and that was all he knew. Dr. Doyle, in his examination, replied that "he would be highly amused at a man who buried the word of God," and "he would reward the man for his proof of being filled with the right faith."

One of the presidents of the Council of Trent, Cardinal Stanislao Osio, a Spaniard, declared that "to permit the reading of the Bible to the laity is to give holy things to dogs, and to cast pearls before swine."

A Spanish author says, that if a person should come to his bishop to ask leave to read the Bible, with the best intention, the bishop should answer him from Matt. 20 : 21, "You know not what you ask." And indeed, he observes, the nature of this demand indicates an heretical disposition.

The reading of the Bible was prohibited by Henry VIII., except by those who occupied high offices in the State; a noble lady or gentleman might read it in "their garden or orchard," or other retired places; but men and women in the lower ranks were positively forbidden to read it, or to have it read to them, under the penalty of a month's imprisonment.

Doctor Franklin has preserved an anecdote of the prohibited Bible in the time of our Catholic Mary. His family had an English Bible, and to conceal it the more securely, they conceived the project of fastening it open with packthreads across the leaves, on the inside of the lid of a close-stool. "When my great-grandfather wished to read to his family, he reversed the lid of the close-stool upon his knees and passed the leaves from one side to the other, which were held down on each by the packthread. One of the children was stationed at the door to give notice if he saw an officer of the Spiritual Court make his appearance; in that case the lid was restored to its place, with the Bible concealed under it as before."

The reader may meditate on what the *popes did*, and what they probably would *have done*, had not Luther happily been in a humor to abuse the pope and begin a *Reformation*. It would be curious to sketch an account of the *probable* situation of *Europe* at the present moment had the pontiffs preserved the omnipotent power of which they had gradually possessed themselves.[1]

Had D'Israeli lived twenty years in Italy, he might have thought it sufficiently curious to sketch an account of the actual condition of the country.

[1] "Curiosities of Literature," D'Israeli, Vol. II., p. 176.

CHAPTER XXV

ROMANISM AND THE BIBLE (CONTINUED)

THE last papal bull of Gregory XVI., dated May 8, 1844, contains the following:

Venerable brothers, health and greeting apostolical! Among the many attempts which the enemies of Catholicism, under whatever name they may appear, are daily making in our age to seduce the truly faithful and deprive them of the holy instructions of the faith, the efforts of those Bible societies are conspicuous, which, originally established in England and propagated throughout the universe, labor everywhere to disseminate the books of the Holy Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue. . . Hence the warnings and decrees of our predecessor, Innocent III., of happy memory, on the subject of lay societies and meetings of women who had assembled themselves in the diocese of Metz for objects of piety and study of the Holy Scriptures. Hence the prohibitions which subsequently appeared in France and Spain during the sixteenth century with respect to the Bible in the vulgar tongue. Notwithstanding this, some new sectarians . . . feared not to blame these justifiable precautions of the Apostolic See, as if the Holy Book had been at all times, and for all the faithful, useful and so indispensable that no authority could assail it.

After referring to the "vigorous censures" of Clement XI., Pius VI., Pius VII., Leo XII., and "our immediate predecessor, Pius VIII., of happy memory," all of whom bitterly opposed the circulation of the Bible, he concludes as follows:

Wherefore, having consulted some of the cardinals of the Holy Romish Church, after having duly taken counsel with them and listened to their advice, we have decided, venerable brothers, on addressing you this letter, by which we again condemn the Bible societies, reproved long ago by our predecessors, and by virtue of the supreme authority of our apostleship we reprove by name and condemn the aforesaid society, called the Christian Alliance, founded last year in New York; it, together with every other society associated with it, or which may become so. Let all

know, then, the enormity of the sin against God and his church which they are guilty of who dare to associate themselves with any of these societies or abet them in any way. Moreover, we confirm and renew the decrees recited above, delivered in former times by apostolic authority against the publication, distribution, reading, and possession of books of the Holy Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue.

This means, of course, that the great mass of the people who understand nothing except the "vulgar tongue"—*i. e.*, the language spoken by the people—are to be entirely deprived of God's word. The Bible in an unknown tongue is no Bible at all.

In the year 1846, Pius IX. wrote to the primate of Poland concerning Bible societies, as follows:

We have been truly shocked at this most crafty device by which the very foundations of religion are undermined. We have deliberated upon the measures proper to be adopted by our pontifical authority, and in order to remedy and abolish this pestilence as far as possible—this defilement of the faith, so eminently dangerous to souls—it becomes your episcopal duty, first of all, to expose the wickedness of this nefarious scheme. It is evident from experience that the Holy Scriptures, when circulated in the vulgar tongue, have, through the temerity of men, produced more harm than benefit. Warn the people intrusted to your care that they fall not into the snares prepared for their everlasting ruin.

That is, as you value your souls, have nothing to do with Bible societies or the Bibles they circulate. Several times after this Pius IX. speaks of "these insidious Bible societies," and unconditionally and unmercifully condemns them. In the Papal Syllabus of Errors, he groups Bible societies along with socialism, communism, and secret societies, as *pests*. Let us bear in mind too, that Pius IX. was not a child of the Dark Ages, but that his entire career, which terminated in 1878, was run in the full blaze of the nineteenth century.

Before 1870, the year in which the temporal power passed away, the pope took every possible precaution to prevent Bibles from coming into Rome.

An old Roman told me that trunks and packages of all

kinds were diligently searched at the gates of the city with special reference to the discovery of Bibles. It is a significant fact that the officers of the pope were sworn into power by kissing the cross and not the Bible. Pius IX. was doubtless no little grieved and offended when he heard that Victor Emmanuel, when about to cause his officers to swear allegiance to the new government, called for a Bible in Latin and Italian. Greater still was his grief when he learned that the Protestant colporter had entered the gates and was publicly carrying on his "foul traffic" and filling the city with his forbidden merchandise.

This unholy feeling with reference to the Bible still exists in Italy, and cardinals, bishops, and the entire Roman clergy, with some rare exceptions, use their power and influence to prevent its circulation among the people. Only a few days ago an ex-monk informed me that if it is known that a monk has become fond of his Bible, and is disposed to read it attentively and seriously, his companions begin at once to call him a Protestant. If his superiors hear of it he is reproved for his irregular conduct, and sometimes suspended from the privileges of his office, for they have learned that one cannot study the Bible and remain satisfied in a monastery.

If the bishop knows that a priest is preaching the Bible to his people, or if he seems to prefer the Bible to Catholic dogmatic theology, to sermons on the saints, and other kindred subjects, he is cautioned and reproved; and should this fail in its desired effect he is at once suspended, *i. e.*, he can neither preach, nor say mass, nor confess any one. Besides being a social disgrace, this deprives the poor monk of a large part of his income, and for this reason not many would be likely to commit the offense the second time.

Of course, under such circumstances great ignorance must prevail. Many of the monks sincerely believe that Paul said mass every morning and confessed all who came to him, just as they do, because the church says that these are apostolic

institutions. They believe also, that after Peter's unworthy conduct in Antioch, for which Paul sharply reproved him, the next morning Peter was found bowing humbly at the confessional where Paul was accustomed to officiate.

Though Italian priests are not entirely ignorant of the Bible, still I have generally found that their Bible is both smaller and larger than mine, being a mixture of Scripture, tradition, and fable, with some very important parts of the inspired word omitted entirely. A young priest in Rome, who frequently attended a private Bible class in my house, could not believe at first that the Bible says nothing about the childhood of Mary. Being thoroughly convinced that we were mistaken, he offered to bring his Bible and show us the passages. The next week he was obliged to confess that he had failed, and for the first time he realized that Scripture and tradition were strangely mixed in his mind. He acknowledged that he had never been taught to make the distinction.

His is only a typical case, the great mass of the priests and the people being in the same condition. I have heard strange stories and fables quoted by ignorant people who honestly believe they are a part of Scripture ; nor is it easy to convince most of them to the contrary. Those who have been fed all their lives on such trash do not take readily to the Bible. They find it tame and uninteresting, and too exacting.

A few months ago a young priest, who was then serving his term in the army, began to attend evangelical meetings. A copy of the Bible was put into his hands, and for the first time he began to study it attentively. The more he read the more he wondered, for not only was he constantly discovering new truths, but to his great surprise he found that the larger part of the theological instruction he had received was entirely out of harmony with Scripture truth. One day he said to the pastor, who had been prudent and diligent in leading him to a knowledge of the truth :

"But how is it possible that I ever learned such things! How could my teachers so deceive me? Now I see that I was all wrong. The study of the Bible has opened my eyes. But what am I to do? Before leaving home my mother made me promise that when my military term was ended, I would return to my studies and to the priesthood. As we separated she put into my hands a special prayer to the Virgin, which I was to repeat every day. But I cannot any longer pray to the Virgin." And then, as if he were almost afraid to make the admission, he added, "I do hope she will not be angry with me."

This confusion of God's word with tradition and fable and dogmas of the church is almost universal in Italy, the fruit of centuries of persistent effort on the part of Roman Catholic authorities from the pope down. In this way many of the people have been fatally deceived. In most cases the people are entirely dependent for their knowledge of God's word on what the priest is pleased to give them, and even should the priest happen to be acquainted with the Bible, he is strictly forbidden to interpret it contrary to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. He must make the two agree, and the preference must be given to the church. If Scripture and tradition are hopelessly mixed in his mind, all the better, for then he is not likely to give his superiors any trouble, and his own mind is less likely to be disturbed by doubt.

A colporter, on visiting a village church, found an image over the door, and when the priest appeared he said to him: "Whose image is this, and why do you keep it here?"

"That is Saint Christopher, who carries the dead across the river Jordan," replied the priest. "Don't you know that wonderful story of how a little child came to him and wanted to cross, and in the midst of the stream the child became so heavy that Saint Christopher nearly sank beneath the burden, and when he finally reached the shore, the child revealed himself as the Lord Jesus?"

"But where did you learn all this?" asked the colporter, curious to know what reply he would get.

"In the Holy Scriptures," said the priest. "I think it is found in the Epistle of James."

"You must be mistaken," answered the colporter; "but as I have a Bible with me, let us read together the Epistle of James and see if it is there."

"Well, to tell you the truth," said the priest, "I have never read the Bible; but I was taught that this fact is there, and I believe it." Of course he was not willing to hear the colporter read the Bible, and the conversation was brought to an abrupt conclusion.

A prominent Italian in making a quotation from the Bible, said the passage was found in Second Corinthians by the Apostle John. As late as 1844 it was officially proclaimed by the Roman Curia, in a papal bull of Gregory XVI., that no one should "dare under any pretext whatever, to interpret or explain the holy pages contrary to the traditions of the Holy Fathers, and to the service of the Catholic Church." The ruling thought has been to make the Scriptures agree with the doctrines of the church, and hence in catechisms and books of devotion very much of God's word has been entirely left out, all in fact which could seriously militate against the Church of Rome.

In some cases the text of the Bible has been completely changed so as to teach the doctrines of the church. A French New Testament, printed at Bordeaux, in 1686, with the approval of the archbishop, contains the following: "He himself shall be saved, yet in all cases as by the *fire of purgatory*" (1 Cor. 3 : 15). "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter days some will separate themselves from the *Roman Faith*" (1 Tim. 4 : 1). This edition is now very rare, but a copy may be seen in the British Museum. Another edition, issued by the doctors of Louvain at Paris, in 1662, among other changes contains the following: "Drink

ye all *twelve* of it" (Matt. 26 : 27). "And all the *twelve* drank of it" (Mark 14 : 23).

So far as I have been able to learn, the second commandment is excluded from every catechism of the Church of Rome published in Italy, and for a very obvious reason.

The importance the Church of Rome has given to tradition, making it equal to Scripture, is well known. Practically the church has placed tradition above the Bible. Bishop Canus says: "Tradition is not only of greater force than the Scriptures, but almost all disputations with heretics are to be referred to traditions." Costerus says: "The excellency of the unwritten word doth far surpass the Scripture. . . The Scriptures do not contain clearly all the mysteries of religion, . . but tradition contains in it all truth . . . hence it will follow that tradition is the interpreter of all Scriptures."

Some months ago an Italian illustrated paper, "*Illustrazione Popolare*," contained a beautiful cut representing the reading of the Bible, which was accompanied by these striking words:

> Among Catholics the reading of the Bible is a very rare thing. Who of us reads that sublime book which contains so much human wisdom? Protestants, on the other hand, cannot do without it. They feel more the need of a psalm of David than they do of their daily bread, or of a few verses of Genesis than of their rum. Even in the most remote regions, wherever Englishmen are found, at the reading of the Bible all are silent, thoughtful. After a week of hard work they find great comfort in the pages of the prophets or of the evangelists, which to them seem to be the very word of God.

This witness is true, and it is easy to account for the fact that the reading of the Bible is so rare among Catholics, when popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests are against it, when the people are constantly told that the church is their infallible guide, when the Bible is published only in Latin or in such costly editions that very few of the people would think of

buying it, when no one is allowed to read it without special permission of the priest, when no penitent is ever directed to the Bible for instruction and comfort, when every Protestant edition is placed in the "*Index*" as a forbidden book, when all who are found in possession of one of these books can only wash away their sin by confession and penance—these and other causes are sufficient to account for the fact that in Italy not one Roman Catholic in a hundred thousand really studies his Bible. Scores of examples could be cited to prove that this hostility to the Bible still exists in Italy, being confined, however, mostly to the priests and to those under their direct influence. The burning of Bibles is not a thing of the past, but still goes on in Italy.

In 1871 a colporter visited a large town some twenty miles from Rome and began selling his Bibles. While the people were crowding about him with gaping curiosity, and many were buying his strange merchandise, a priest presented himself and offered to buy the entire lot, and the colporter did not refuse his offer. He had them carried at once to the center of the great cathedral square, where a multitude of people had assembled, and deliberately burned them to ashes, at the same time expressing his indignation that any one would dare to buy, sell, or read books which the church had prohibited. In the meantime the colporter had telegraphed to Rome for a new supply, and what was the chagrin of the priest the next day to find the people more eager to purchase a copy of this wonderful book.

Similar cases with similar results have occurred in various parts of Italy, so that priests are beginning to learn that the burning of Bibles does not pay. Besides, public opinion has greatly changed during the last twenty years, and a public burning of Bibles would probably be impossible except in some remote town, where the priest feels sure of his ground. Even now, however, the colporter is constantly opposed by the priest, and every Bible or Gospel he can lay his hands

upon is at once destroyed. Bibles and tracts are often publicly denounced from the pulpit, and as a last resort money will sometimes be offered to those who bring them to the priest. Not unfrequently the colporter has his books, including the Bible, torn into fragments before his eyes.

Some years ago a prominent and able priest, Curci, a man highly esteemed for his learning and piety, after years of hard work, published a commentary on the Bible, his text being, of course, that of a Catholic version. He felt that it was the work of his life, and it was his earnest desire that it might be much studied by the younger clergy. But Curci's love for the Bible and consequent liberal and evangelical views had brought him somewhat into disrepute at the Vatican, and during the latter part of his life he was forbidden to preach, and after his death his loved commentary was placed on the "*Index*," so that now no good Catholic can read it.

Later, Hon. G. Bonghi, a member of the Italian Parliament, a well-known literary character, and a stanch Catholic, published a "Life of Christ." It did not take the Vatican authorities long to discover that it was too evangelical and biblical in tone, so that too was quickly placed on the "*Index.*" Had Bonghi published a thoroughly rationalistic or even immoral book, nothing whatever would have been said by the authorities of the Church of Rome.

A. J. Gordon, D. D.,[1] made the following statement before a great gathering in Music Hall in Boston :

> I can give you a remarkable illustration from one who might not accord with me in other things. Only a few years ago in Paris, a young man of pure morals, a stanch Roman Catholic, asked himself this question as he went over France and mingled among the peasantry : "Why is it that the peasantry of France are so inferior to the peasantry of Scotland and America?" Henri Lasserre answered thus : "I see very clearly that the intelligence that I find in Scotland and America is largely due to the reading of the Holy Scriptures by the common people. Therefore I will translate the four Gospels into French in the most attractive

[1] See also "The Holy Spirit in Missions," p. 182, by A. J. Gordon, D. D.

style, and seek to get the endorsement of the pope upon it." He translated it and got the pope's endorsement, singular to say, and in one year one hundred thousand copies of this translation of the Gospels were circulated in France, the edition was exhausted, and the demand could not be supplied.

Is there any wonder that very soon the Vatican thundered and the power behind the pope said, No? And the same infallible power which had said, You may circulate the Gospel, said, No man can circulate it, and it was taken out of the hands of the people and its publication stopped. I found a copy of it when I was last in France, and prize it very highly. The last I heard of poor Henri Lasserre he had gone to Rome to see if he could not get the pope to revoke his ban upon the four Gospels. I do not think he will succeed, but if he does you will have a most remarkable thing. First, the pope's infallible benediction upon the Gospels; second, his infallible malediction; and, third, his infallible contradiction.

The whole sad story is effectively told by William Wright, D. D., in a booklet entitled, "The Power Behind the Pope; A Tale of Blighted Hopes" (London, James Nisbet & Co.). Dr. Wright says:

To right-minded people the story is too sad for fierce denunciation. As M. Lasserre points out in the following preface, the Church of Rome did not always withhold the Gospels from the people, and it seemed as if she was going to break with her less worthy past, and let the children hear their Father's voice in his own words. We are disappointed. The Gospel is not considered a safe book to send forth, on the authority of that colossal fabric at Rome, which has arisen on the *débris* of paganism.

The remarkable "Decree," which condemned this translation of the New Testament as one of the "books of degraded doctrines," reads as follows:

DECREE.

Monday, December 19, 1887. The Sacred Congregation of the Most Eminent and Reverend Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church—by OUR MOST HOLY LORD, POPE LEO XIII., and the Holy Apostolic See, appointed and delegated for the Index of books of degraded doctrine, and for proscribing, expurgating, and sanctioning the same throughout the whole Christian State—held in the Apostolic Palace of

the Vatican, on December 19, 1887, hath condemned and doth condemn, hath proscribed and doth proscribe or if otherwise condemned and proscribed, hath commanded and doth command, the following works to be put on the Index of forbidden books:

. . . . . .

"*Les Saints Evangiles,*" *traduction nouvelle, par Henri Lasserre, Paris, 1887.*

. . . . . .

And so let no one of whatsoever rank or condition, dare in any place or in any tongue, either to publish in the future, or if published, to read or to retain the forementioned condemned and proscribed works, but let him be held bound to deliver them to the Ordinaries of the place, or to the Inquisitors of heretical iniquity, under the penalties proclaimed in the Index of forbidden books.

These having been referred to OUR MOST HOLY LORD, POPE LEO XIII., by me the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, HIS HOLINESS approved the Decree and ordered it to be issued. In token whereof, etc. Granted at Rome, on December 20, 1887. Fr. THOMAS MARIA Card. MARTINELLI, *Episc. Sabinen. Praef.* Fr. Hieronymus Pius Saccheri, *Ord. Praed. S. Ind. Congreg. Secretary.*

"The immediate result of this 'Decree' was the withdrawal of Lasserre's version from circulation," says Doctor Wright. "So completely was this done that it was only after a weary search I found a copy at Paris. When I asked for the book, I got the uniform reply, 'All copies have been recalled.' Any additional words from me would only lessen the effect of this astounding 'Decree.'"

I once became quite intimate with a young priest, the assistant of the regular parish priest. On learning that I had several books which I desired to leave with some one who would pass them around among the people, he offered to take them himself, adding, however, these significant words: "But you must not put a Bible among them, for you know I would not dare to give this to the people."

Why is it that the Church of Rome has so persistently opposed the general circulation of the Bible among the people? The answer may be found in a remarkable document now in

the Imperial Library at Paris (folio B., No. 1088, Vol. II., pp. 641–650), entitled: "Directions Concerning the Most Opportune Methods for Strengthening the Romish Church," and dated Bologna, October 20, 1553. It appears that Pope Julius III., alarmed at the rapid progress of Reformation doctrines, and not knowing what measures to adopt to prevent it, called together three of his most learned bishops, in order that they might consult together with all seriousness, and then propose to the pope the measures they considered the most opportune for saving the Roman Curia. They conclude their long statement thus:

Finally (of all the advice we can give Your Beatitude, we have reserved for the last the most necessary), in this you must keep your eyes wide open, and put forth all your energies, viz, to permit the reading of the Gospel as little as possible, especially in the vulgar tongue, in all those countries under your jurisdiction. The very little which is accustomed to be read at Mass should suffice, and more than this should not be allowed to any one whatever. So long as men were satisfied with that little the interests of Your Holiness prospered, but when they desired to read more than this, then they began to decline.

In short, it is that book more than any other which has raised against us those whirlwinds and tempests by means of which we barely escaped being utterly destroyed. And in fact, if any one examines it diligently, and then confronts the instructions of the Bible with what is done in our churches, he will at once discover the discordance, and will see that our doctrine is many times different from, and oftener still contrary to it; which thing, if the people should understand, they would not cease to declaim against us until all is divulged, and then we would become the object of universal scorn and hatred. Therefore it is necessary to withdraw the Bible from the people's sight, but with great care, so as not to excite tumults.

Bononiæ (Bologna) 20 Octobris, 1553.

VINCENTIUS DE DURANTIBUS, *Episc. Thermulorum Brisciensis.*
EGIDIUS FALCETA, *Episc. Caprulen.*
GHERARDUS BUSDRAGUS, *Episc. Thessalon.*[1]

[1] It has been said that this is a spurious document, but I have found no proof of the statement. My attention was first called to the existence of such a document by a prominent Waldensian, who made use of the facts in a public speech.

But why prolong the sad story? Rome's hostility to the Bible, and her systematic and persistent effort to keep it out of the hands of the people in this country, is a fact beyond dispute, and her success is painfully evident on every hand. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

This dearth of Bible knowledge in Italy has produced its legitimate fruit; priestcraft, superstition, formalism, fanaticism, and paganism on the one hand, and infidelity, atheism, worldliness, and great religious indifference on the other. But after all, how can Rome consistently encourage the study of the Bible on the part of the people at large? Experience has proved that, as a rule, just in proportion as the people know and love the Bible, they will turn away from Romanism. Every evangelical worker in Italy will readily admit that if he can succeed in getting a Roman Catholic really interested in the study of the Bible, half the battle is won.

To give the Bible to a Roman Catholic seriously concerned about religion and anxious to know and follow the truth, is equal to telling him to become an evangelical. A careful and conscientious study of the Bible on the part of a Roman Catholic, will, to say the least, greatly shake his confidence in many of the doctrines of his church, and if it is continued long enough, will generally end in his genuine conversion. It is the word of God, still so hated and feared by the priests in this land, which is yet to conquer and destroy Romanism. Little by little the people are learning to distinguish between Scripture and tradition, between dogmas of the church and commandments of God, between rites and observances whose chief object is to put power into the priest's hands and money in his pocket, and doctrines whose design is to enlighten the mind, comfort the heart, and save the soul. But for the priests, thousands of the people would welcome the Bible.

But despite all these things the circulation of the Bible in Italy is increasing every year, and this is certainly a most hopeful and encouraging sign. Those who honor God's word he will honor. Hon. G. Bonghi was right when he said in the Italian Parliament that the greatness and prosperity of England, Germany, and America were largely due to an open Bible. Dear reader, if you have a Catholic friend do your best to induce him to study the Bible, to accept it as God's word, and as the final appeal in all questions concerning man's eternal salvation.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CONFESSIONAL

VOLUMES might be written on this subject, but a few words must suffice.

Priests never cease urging the people to come to confession, which they make a *sine qua non* of pardon and salvation. It is well understood what a priest means by confession, and what a fearful weapon it has been in his hands. When the church had the power she gave the people no choice in the matter, all being compelled to bend the knee before the confessional, and to pretend at least to reveal their most secret thoughts and deeds to him who sat within. To refuse often meant ostracism and persecution, more cruel than death itself. To declare that one had already confessed to God, and could not feel the need of confessing to man, only made matters worse.

Such a course naturally tended to destroy genuine religious sentiment, and to encourage hypocrisy and infidelity. Merely to avoid the social and material evils that would surely follow upon refusal, many yielded to the pressure of the priests and the Roman Curia, at the same time nursing a spirit of hatred and revenge. Forced and feigned belief is far worse than open infidelity, and there is more hope of a naked barbarian than of a nominal Roman Catholic who has all his life been to confession against his will.

Among the many elements of power which Rome possesses, none perhaps has been used with more effect than the confessional. The great mass of Roman Catholics have a lingering fear that without confession and the absolution of a priest the soul is insecure, and they cherish a trembling hope that

by such means the pains of purgatory may be alleviated and the gates of paradise finally opened. Many, however, are fully persuaded that these, together with the mass, are the convenient and heaven-appointed methods of obtaining forgiveness and eternal salvation.

In this instance, as in many others, Rome has known how to lay hold of certain fundamental doctrines of Christianity and of human nature, adapting them to her own purposes. The doctrine of confession, for example, is not only an integral part of the Bible, but of human nature itself, and is as universal as the consciousness of sin and guilt.

He who sins instinctively experiences a desire to confess that sin. Very possibly he may be restrained by pride, or shame, or fear, but the natural impulse is there, unless perchance the conscience has been seared. Let one man knowingly injure another, and if the conscience be tender and sensitive, he can never rest satisfied till a frank confession has been made to the offended party, or to some one who claims to act for him. Who would dare to carry through life the heavy burden of conscious guilt without confession of some kind? The legitimate result of confession is absolution. He who repents and confesses a wrong has a right to expect forgiveness, without which confession would be nothing less than mockery; but with the certainty of forgiveness it becomes a great privilege which few, if any, could neglect.

The Church of Rome has known just how to turn to her own account this deep-rooted principle of human nature, misinterpreting Scripture for the purpose, and gradually leading the people quite away from the biblical idea of confession and absolution. Auricular confession did not become a doctrine of the Church of Rome until A. D. 1215, when it was authoritatively required by the Fourth Lateran Council. Fleury says: "This is the first canon that I know of which has commanded general confession." [1] Earlier attempts had been made to es-

[1] Fleury, "Eccl. Hist.," *Tom.* XVI., p. 375. Paris, 1769.

tablish the custom, but without permanent success. During the past six centuries millions in this country, both high and low, have lived and died in the firm belief that the priest, while sitting in the confessional, occupies the place of God, with the full right to hear and forgive sins. How convenient, and yet how blinding and ruinous!

I recall an incident related by Miss Hazeltine, a cousin, who during our Civil War was engaged in hospital work in Clinton, Miss. Among the sick she found an Irish Roman Catholic, who was rather sad and morose. One morning she noticed that in spite of pain and weakness he appeared unusually bright and cheerful, and in answer to her inquiry he replied: "It's all right now, it's all right. The priest came this morning, and me sins are pardoned, me sins are pardoned." I was but a lad, and this was my first practical acquaintance with Romanism, but it made a lasting impression.

The abuses of the confessional in Italy are too many and too awful to relate, and constitute, I verily believe, one of the blackest pages of human history. I have in my possession a number of *bona fide* examples, many of which could not with propriety be given in a book intended for general circulation, in which the confessor used his office for purely selfish and even vile purposes. There may be confessors who sincerely seek to guide and comfort those who appeal to them, desiring only their spiritual good, never abusing in the least their delicate and tempting position, but, from all I have been able to learn, such examples are very rare indeed. In Italy the confessional has been used for every possible purpose, and for the commission of the vilest sins and the blackest crimes.

A gentleman once said to me that he had seen a printed list of questions for the use of a confessor which he would be ashamed to read to his wife. An ex-confessor gave me a full description of the course often pursued by many priests, especially when confessing girls, and the great arch-enemy

himself could not have contrived a more effectual means for breaking down the barriers of modesty and for corrupting the young and tender heart and conscience. It is cruel in the extreme to expose a priest to such enticing and debasing temptations, to say nothing of the girls and others who come under his influence. Alas, alas, for the eternal ruin which has thus been brought to many a soul!

It is well known in Italy that confession is very elastic, especially between priests. A poor peasant will be questioned carefully and minutely, not unfrequently severe penances being enjoined, and absolution refused, or at least postponed, while a red-robed cardinal is sure to receive immediate and entire absolution, with no embarrassing questions or unpleasant conditions, however slight and partial his confession may have been. Nearly the same may be said in the case of a bishop, or of any other prominent ecclesiastic, while almost any priest finds his way greatly smoothed.

Just here I must make a confession myself, a public one, however, and it is this: *The conscience of the average Italian priest is to me an inexplicable mystery.* Favoritism in the confessional! Think of it! And yet it is a common commodity in this country.

Many confessors often make the conditions of absolution as few and as easy as possible, never turning a penitent away for any cause whatever, thus establishing a kind of popularity with those who have sinned, especially if they have been guilty of the baser sins of the flesh. As each one is generally left free to choose his own confessor, priests have learned that if they are too embarrassingly inquisitive, and their conditions of absolution are too severe, many will turn away from them to find another more indulgent. Sometimes the penitent goes away without a word, but never returns. Others, however, will say boldly and frankly, "All right; if you don't give me absolution, I can easily find some one who will." And they are not disappointed.

One day a man confessed that he had stolen fifteen hundred francs (about three hundred dollars), and asked for absolution. "Other sins," said the confessor, "are pardoned through repentance, but theft can only be forgiven after restitution."

"But how is it possible for me to do this," said the shopkeeper, "when I have stolen small sums from so many different persons?"

"At least," replied the confessor, "you can restore the five hundred francs you obtained with a false signature."

"But I shall pay for several masses, and then you can absolve me," pleaded the guilty man.

"But first of all you must restore, in so far as possible, what you have taken," insisted the confessor.

"But I do not understand why you are so exacting. Some time ago I confessed a similar theft to another priest and handed him twenty francs, and he gave me absolution without another word," said the shopkeeper.

"Then you have stolen before this year?" inquired the confessor.

"Yes," said the man; "last year I stole two thousand francs, but twenty francs gave me absolution."

"And there shall be, like people, like priest."

These, and other things which are really too painful for belief, are but the natural outcome of the Romish system as seen in Italy.

The confessional has proved a source of great evil in this country. It has been peculiarly dangerous and corrupting to the priests; it has brought discord and ruin into many families and communities; it has been a favorite political weapon, and has often been unscrupulously employed to rob the sick and the dying; it has been used again and again to suppress the truth, and to stir up the people against those who dare to preach it; it has encouraged hypocrisy and sin, and kept many of the people in fatal ignorance of the true idea of

genuine repentance and confession and consequent forgiveness.

In Italy, more than anywhere else, perhaps, these evils are recognized and to some extent deplored, the consequence being that thousands have turned away from the confessional with indignation and disgust. Many, alas, in doing so, have given up religion entirely, while others still remain in the church, and would not think of neglecting mass. But in spite of recognized abuses and evils, and almost universal skepticism concerning the priests, the confessional still holds multitudes in its strong grasp and exerts a mighty influence over the majority of the people, many of whom believe implicitly that the voice of the priest is the voice of God, and that when he says, "*Ego te absolvo*," the transaction is approved and accepted at the court of heaven. Small wonder, then, that men and women are willing to whisper the secrets of their hearts into the ear of a priest. Had we the antecedents and environment of Italian Romanists you and I would do the same. Poison may be very sweet if it is believed to be medicine.

An Italian once said to me: "You Americans who have always been Protestants, cannot imagine the power the confessional has over some of us in this country. There was a time when I as honestly believed in the power of the priest to forgive my sins and in the necessity of his absolution, as I believed in anything. When I sinned, I was never happy till I had secured that all-powerful absolution. I even practised deceit in order to get it. Few, if any, ever confess everything, and yet this is required before absolution is granted. In making my confession I often left out the sin or sins that I was ashamed to confess, and when the confessor would ask if I had confessed all, I told a deliberate lie. When he repeated the question, I would pretend to have forgotten one sin, and acknowledge that I had told a lie, and then I could affirm with a feeling of real relief that I had made a clean

breast of the whole matter. Of course absolution followed, and I went home contented, and encouraged to repeat the operation as often as needed." Oh, the sophistries and the bewitching power of the evil one!

The people far less than the system, should be blamed and condemned. It has come to pass in Italy that the character of a priest does not in the least affect the value of his offices. A good priest is preferable, but a bad one will do. This cannot be otherwise than highly injurious to priest and people. Alas, for that church and country where the standard for ministerial character is low and unworthy! This, perhaps, has been Italy's greatest curse. Do not be too ready to complain if a preacher who falls is sharply and severely dealt with by an aggrieved church and an indignant public, even sometimes finding it impossible to re-instate himself. Think of Italy and of Italian priests, and "rejoice with trembling."

But it cannot be denied that great changes are gradually taking place in Italy. Many causes are uniting to loosen the hold that the confessional has upon the people, but we can never expect its power to be entirely broken until, with the Bible in hand, we can convince the people that it is a most unworthy and dangerous travesty of the teachings of Christ and the apostles on this subject.

CHAPTER XXVII

INDULGENCES

THE most hopelessly confused and ill-defined of all the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church is the subject now under consideration. The question of indulgences is a sore point with many ecclesiastics, and not a few Catholics, especially in England and America, are disposed either to deny altogether the charges made by Protestants, or at least to condone the whole matter as much as possible.

Whatever may have been taught elsewhere, the doctrine of indulgences, as officially taught and practically believed in Italy, is irrational, anti-biblical, and highly injurious to morality and spirituality. Whatever may be the practice of the Romish Church at this moment, it is a fact beyond dispute that a regular traffic of indulgences has been carried on in this land, participated in by people, priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes. This was especially the case during the period immediately preceding the Reformation, and not until 1563, at the conclusion of the famous Council of Trent, were the most scandalous features of the above corrected.

In 1522 the Roman Catholic princes of Germany addressed a petition to Pope Hadrian VI. for the remedy of a "Hundred Grievances of the German Nation," which they set forth in that document. Among these are the following:

"No. 5. How license to sin with impunity is granted for money."

"No. 67. How more money than penitence is exacted from sinners."

"No. 91. How bishops extort money from the concubinage of priests."

They claim that the vendors of indulgences

Declare that by means of these purchasable pardons, not only are past and future sins of the living forgiven, but also those of such as have departed this life and are in the purgatory of fire, provided only something be counted down. . . Every one, in proportion to the price he had expended in these wares, promised himself impunity in sinning. Hence come fornications, incests, adulteries, perjuries, homicides, thefts, rapine, usury, and a whole hydra of evils. For what wickedness will mortals shudder at any longer, when they have once persuaded themselves that license and impunity for sinning can he had for money, however extravagant the sum, not only in this life, but after death also, by means of these marketings of Indulgences.

These are Catholic princes, it will be observed, who are bringing these charges.

In speaking of "reserved cases," that is, sins which ordinary confessors are not allowed to absolve, but which are reserved for the bishop, and in special instances for the pope, they say :

But if any one have the means of paying, not only are present breaches of these constitutions allowed. but by the indulgence he has permission to transgress them with impunity for the future. Whence it happens that they who have got such a dispensation lay hold of it as a handle for committing perjury, murder, adultery, and similar atrocities, since any common priest can give them purchasable absolution by virtue of the indulgence.

And the pope, instead of indignantly denying the truth of these horrible charges, tacitly admitted the facts to be as stated. Indeed, he could not deny it, for the book entitled, "Taxes of the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary," was then, and is still, extant, with a regular tariff for the absolution of all kinds of sins, including simony, murder by a priest, parricide, incest, arson, etc. There is even, in some copies of the "Taxes," a special note, stating that graces and dispensations are not to be given to poor persons.

Some items read very curiously. Thus, the price of absolution for the murder of a father, mother, brother or sister,

or wife, if the murderer be a laic, is one ducat and four carlini. But if more than one of these victims have been murdered, and a single absolution be taken out for all, then only half-rates are charged after the first name on the list, for which the full price must be paid. A clerical murderer, in like circumstances, is required to make a journey to Rome.[1]

Granted that this blasphemous sale of indulgences was an abuse, what is the present teaching of the Romish Church with reference to indulgences? That there may be no possibility of injustice or mistake, I shall make extracts from a book published in Rome in 1883 by the Polyglot Press of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, and called, "*Il Tesoro delle Sacre Indulgenze, esposto alle anime pie*," or "The Treasury of Holy Indulgences, explained to Pious Souls." On July 20, 1883, the "Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Relics" declared this work to be authentic, and that it contained a faithful account of the subject.

The author begins his preface as follows:

Among the precious gifts of the manifold grace of God, which are dispensed through the ministry of the Catholic Church, most elect is that of holy indulgences. Through this it is given to draw copiously from that inexhaustible treasury of graces and mercy, viz, the merits of Jesus Christ, to which are also added the merits of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the saints. Through it (the gift of indulgence) we have the means of supplementing the partial satisfactions which we are able to render for our faults, and of compensating abundantly the divine justice. . . We shall not give catalogues of indulgences, this not being a part of our plan, but the faithful may very easily procure them in the little book, "A Collection of Prayers and Pious Works for which Most Holy Indulgences have been Granted by the High Priests," which book has many times been published in Rome in authentic editions, the last by the Press of the Propaganda in 1877. It would also be most useful to consult that other work of greater importance, just come to light in Ratisbon, published by Pustet, and called: "*Decreta Authentica Sacræ Congregationis Indulgentiis Sacrisque Reliquiis præpositæ ab anno 1668 ad annum 1882 edita iussa et auctoritate SS mi D. N. Leonis XIII.*"

[1] See "Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome," pp. 98, 99.

The preface concludes thus :

May the Lord deign to bless this work, and that all who read it may gather therefrom much fruit, availing themselves, both personally and for souls in purgatory, of those indulgences which the Lord dispenses to us through the ministry of his church, and which are very salutary to Christian people.

In Chapter I., after speaking of the dreadful evils of sin, and of the impossibility of expiating all of our own sins in this life by means of penances, and hence of the necessity of remaining many centuries in the terrible sufferings of the fire of purgatory, the author exclaims (page 9) :

But, oh ! how benignant is the divine mercy ! The Lord, beholding our weakness and misery, and what a very long and painful thing it would be to pay the very heavy debts which we have contracted with his justice, and seeing how terrible, and at the same time how very just are those sufferings which await us in purgatory, he offers us another easy, light, and most efficacious means of satisfying that debt of temporal sufferings which our faults demand, and for which by his mercy we obtain pardon. And this means is indulgences.

Then in Chapter II. we learn what it is that constitutes this great treasury or bank of indulgences. He says :

The infinite satisfactions of Jesus Christ, and the superabundant satisfactions of the saints, compose that inexhaustible treasury which is called : The Treasury of the Holy Church. And an indulgence is nothing else than a dispensation which is made by the holy church upon that same treasury.

In other words, it is a kind of check upon that great bank.

This is the author's explanation of "the communion of the saints" :

That society of all the members of the church, the church militant, those who suffer in purgatory, and those who reign in heaven ; a society which unites all these together, with Christ as their head, and from which results a holy commerce, a sacred community of prayers, of merits, of good works, among all the members of the church, bound together and united to Christ by the chain of love (page 14).

That this treasury of the holy church is inexhaustible cannot be doubted. The merits of Christ are infinite, and these, left as an inheritance to his church, would suffice for the salvation, not of one alone, but of infinite worlds, and as a satisfaction for the sufferings which an infinite number of men had contracted with the divine justice. Then the merits of the most blessed Virgin are very great beyond measure, and are sufficient for the salvation of all men, as St. Thomas teaches. Very great also are the merits of the saints; those of the apostles, who labored and suffered so much for the preaching of the holy faith; of the martyrs, who sustained such atrocious torments; of the confessors, the virgins, and of so many other saints, who performed so many virtuous acts, and accumulated such treasures of expiation for themselves in order to satisfy the divine justice. Now, in order that this treasure of expiations should not be lost, and that the merits of the one might avail for the other, as in one body the health of one member the other members enjoy, the Lord providently arranged that a treasury should be formed of all these merits and expiations, which, united with the merits of Jesus Christ, should constitute the treasury of the church, of which we are all partakers (page 17).

He concludes the chapter thus:

We have explained, we think, with sufficient clearness, what is meant by the treasury of the holy church. From this, as from an inexhaustible fountain, the church itself draws, and places these treasures in the hands of the faithful by means of indulgences. With their hands full of these treasures the faithful present themselves before the throne of the divine justice and mercy, and the Lord accepts that precious offering, and condones, in whole or in part, the debt contracted by them, canceling them from the great book where are inscribed our merits and our demerits, the glory and the suffering which we have earned by our works.

In Chapter III. the author gives us the history of indulgences, claiming that they date from apostolic times. He says:

And, to go back to apostolic times, it is well known that a certain one in Corinth having gravely and publicly sinned, the Apostle Paul inflicted upon him a serious and merited penance. And only after some time, when this one had given clear evidence of repentance, did the apostle, for the sake also of the faithful in that city, by the authority of Jesus Christ, absolve him from that suffering which remained to be endured, which is equal to saying that he conferred upon him an indulgence. (Page 20. And on page 25 the author says:)

The indulgences granted by Pope Leo X. for building St. Peter's in Rome merit special mention. It is known that in consequence of these indulgences, Martin Luther found a pretence for rebelling against the church, and that Protestants in full chorus have cried out against the traffic, the holy workshop. Concerning this one we shall simply say that, to contribute to the building of a temple, especially of the greatest temple in the world, is a work of religious charity, a proof of piety and faith, which may very properly be remunerated with indulgences. But it must be observed besides, that in promulgating those indulgences the pope sought not only the upbuilding of a material temple, but especially the spiritual profit of the faithful. Since these religious indulgences were announced by Religious (*i. e.*, monks) who passed from city to city, from place to place, preaching the divine word and correcting the customs of the people; it was a kind of mission, and a very fruitful one, to which for the acquisition of indulgences was united, as a condition, an alms for the building of the Vatican Basilica, as to-day, for the acquisition of the Jubilee, often an alms is required for the pious work of the propagation of the faith, or for some other pious object. Therefore, one may see how much evil Luther committed, and how, with him, Protestants maliciously err when they hurl vituperation and calumnies against the Catholic Church on account of indulgences.

We shall not speak here of the indulgences which the councils established up to the time of the Council of Trent, etc. We shall only note how the high priests (popes), by making use of indulgences to stimulate faith, charity, and religion, obtained immense fruits of Christian and social utility. Many times indulgences availed to revive in people a drowsy faith and a languid piety, as the history of the ancient jubilees especially attest. Indulgences were profitable in promoting the building of churches and monasteries, necessary for the spiritual needs of the people; they helped to increase the honor of celebrated sanctuaries and images; they were useful in building and maintaining asylums and hospitals for the relief of bodily infirmities, and for the construction of roads and bridged over rivers, thus rendering easier the passage of pilgrims; they aided in saving from destruction precious codices, offered ecclesiastical libraries; they served to check the ferocity of the Turks who, having taken possession of the greater part of Europe, threatened to carry it back to the times of the barbarians; they served to restore peace between rivals and concord among citizens. They served in every time to excite the Catholic spirit and to temper customs in accordance with religion, particularly the general indulgences of the Jubilee, even those that are not ancient; whence the sadly illustrious d'Alembert, speaking of the celebrated Jubilee in France, in 1776, said: "This cursed Jubilee has retarded by

twenty years the revolution proposed by the philosophers." And, in fact, he erred by a few years only. And Voltaire also exclaimed: "Still another Jubilee, and the revolution is ruined!" Therefore the Lord be praised, and may our hearts rise to his in gratitude for having granted us such a great treasure, viz, indulgences, which redound so greatly to our advantage, and are also fecund of so many blessings for society.

Concerning the value of these indulgences for the spiritual needs of the living and the dead, especially for souls in purgatory, the author says:

The act which is performed by him who applies indulgences to souls in purgatory is not therefore a simple prayer, with a hardening value, but a true oblation, with a satisfactory (atoning) value, which is offered to the Lord for their souls. In fact, he who beseeches a judge to liberate one from prison who is there for debt does one thing, while he who offers to the judge all that is required to pay the debt of the poor prisoner does quite another thing. He who prays for souls in purgatory does the former, while he who applies to them holy indulgences, does the latter (page 33).

In Chapter VII. the author defines the various kinds of indulgences. He says:

Indulgences are divided principally into plenary and partial, perpetual and temporal, local, real, personal, and mixed. We shall explain briefly these distinctions (several chapters being given to their consideration farther on). *Plenary* indulgence is that which remits the temporal (*i. e.*, purgatorial) punishment for sins already remitted as to their guilt. *Partial* indulgence is that which remits only in part the temporal punishment. This indulgence is usually for seven years, or one hundred days, or forty days. This does not mean, however, that such indulgences liberate a soul from purgatory for seven years, or one hundred days, or forty days, but this indulgence secures to the person what he would have earned by seven years, or one hundred days, or forty days of those penances which were once in vogue in the church. Hence, such indulgences ought not to be considered of small value, when by repeating a brief prayer, or even an ejaculation, the soul would be enriched with as many *satisfactions* as it could have earned by many years, and hundreds of days of rigorous abstinence, of humiliation, and of mortifications! *Perpetual* indulgences are those granted for always, without any limit of time, while *temporal* indulgences are for a specified period, seven years, ten years,

etc. *Local* indulgences are those granted for visiting a given place, as a church, while *real* indulgences are those granted for a holy act, as, for example, to one who prays before an image or a relic. *Personal* indulgences are those granted to persons, or to a class of persons, and *mixed* indulgences are those granted to places or sacred things, as crosses, etc.

This remarkable book contains one hundred and seventy-four pages, but one more quotation must suffice. On page 143 we read :

In the same way the Holy Church acts toward the faithful living, granting them indulgences, and toward the faithful dead, offering by means of the former the price of redemption, that is, indulgences. But some one might ask : "Do indulgences infallibly avail for the souls of the dead?" And the reply must be : In general they avail infallibly for the souls of the dead ; because, otherwise the church would perform a useless act granting indulgences to be applied to them ; a thing which could not be affirmed without impiety. Whether to this or to that dead one in particular we can hope they may avail, there is not absolute certainty, because the church offers them with the condition "if it please God" ; because God may have just motives in applying indulgences to that soul rather than to this one ; and because God has reserved to himself the dispensation or disposal of his gifts. It will happen sometimes that a hundred poor persons, who have lived piously, will die and no one will think of those who suffer in purgatory. A rich man will die who perhaps settled his accounts at the last hour, and God had mercy upon him, liberating him from hell. In the meantime a great funeral is celebrated for the rich man and hundreds of masses are said for him. What then? Cannot the Lord of these Sacrifices (*i. e.*, masses) give a large part to those poor persons, and keep the rich man, who had merited so much greater punishment, still in purgatory? Would any one dare to complain, and say to the Lord : "Why hast thou done thus?" For this reason the faithful should not be satisfied to celebrate only one privileged mass (which always liberates some soul from purgatory) for a dead man, or to make acquisition for him of only one plenary indulgence, but they should multiply these pious offerings, in order to have greater confidence that the Lord will apply as much as is necessary to that soul for whom such suffrages were offered.

Enough ! This book is declared to be authentic by the "Sacred Congregation of Holy Indulgences and Relics,"

and hence contains the present doctrine of the Romish Church on the subject of indulgences. Comment is unnecessary. By reading the extracts given from this authorized work, the reader will be able to draw his own conclusions.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MASS

PROTESTANTS in general have but vague and hazy ideas about the mass, and even thousands of Catholics in Protestant countries are utterly ignorant of the evils which attend the mass in Italy.

When one studies the practical workings of Romanism with a view to uncovering the errors and abuses which have gradually grown up, each successive subject seems worse than the preceding, and one finds at last that the original is marred and disfigured beyond recognition.

The mass professes to be what we call the Lord's Supper. The origin of the name is doubtful, though it is generally supposed to be derived from a Latin word signifying "dismission," as the leader was accustomed to say just before the communion service, "*Ite missa est*" (Go ye, the assembly is dismissed), only communicants being expected to remain. In the course of time the word *missa* (Italian *messa*) came to be used for the service itself.

An Italian Catholic seldom says, "I am going to church," but, "I am going to mass," and his chief idea of a priest's work is "saying mass," preaching occupying such a subordinate place that it is seldom mentioned. Until they have learned better, they naturally think the same of our own services. A man once asked me with the greatest simplicity: "At what hour do you say mass?"

To celebrate the mass in a becoming manner would require about an hour, though many priests manage to complete their task in half that time. The entire service being in Latin, the people understand little or nothing of what the

priest is saying. Even were the words all Italian, the indistinct, mumbling way in which they are usually recited would render them quite unintelligible. In fact, priests are specially instructed by the Council of Trent to lower the voice at certain points. "If any one saith that the ritual of the Romish Church, according to which a part of the Canon and words of Consecration are propounded in a low tone, is to be condemned, let him be accursed." This is done, of course, in order that the people may not understand, for there are words in the service which cannot possibly be reconciled with the present practice of the Romish Church on this subject.

The mass, instead of being observed only occasionally, as the Lord's Supper is with us, is celebrated every day in all the churches, and often many times during the day. I once read an announcement of a festival in Rome in which it was stated that mass would be recited every half-hour during the days of the festival.

Nor are the two services by any means identical in meaning. With us the Lord's Supper is a very simple ceremony, performed in remembrance of the Saviour, the bread and wine being merely symbolical of his body and blood ; but to the Roman Catholic the mass is an actual sacrifice, the host, or consecrated wafer, containing the entire God-man, body, blood, soul, and divinity. Before that wafer priests and people bow in adoration ; and there was a time when the multitudes dared not refuse to fall upon their knees, or at least to bow the head as the host was carried in procession through the streets. All this was unknown in the early centuries, and it was only by degrees that the Lord's Supper was transformed into the mass, which has been called "a huge superstructure of superstition, idolatry, delusion, and immorality." These are strong words, but they are fully justified by what one sees in Italy.

The Council of Trent declared :

If any denieth that in the Sacrament of the most holy Eucharist are contained, truly, literally, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but saith that he is only therein as in a figure or virtue (influence); let him be anathema.

If any one saith that in the sacred and holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains, conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denieth that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood—the species (appearances) only of the bread and wine remaining; which conversion, indeed, the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation—let him be anathema.

Then at Question 31, Chap. IV., Part II., occur the following words: "In this place the pastors must explain that not the true body of Christ alone, and whatever pertains to the true constitution of a body, such as the *bones* aud *sinews*, but also the entire Christ are contained in this sacrament." The original Latin of this remarkable statement reads as follows: "*Jam vero hoc loco a pastoribus explicandum est, non solum verum Christi corpus, et quicquid ad veram corporis rationem pertinet, veluti ossa et nervos, sed etiam totum Christum in hoc sacramento contineri.*"

Many a Roman Catholic in Italy sincerely believes that having swallowed the consecrated wafer he has received the real Christ into his body, and that should he die in that moment he could not possibly perish. For the same reason the wafer is eaten just before death.

Once having established the doctrine of transubstantiation, the Council of Trent goes a step farther, and says:

There is no room for doubt that all the faithful of Christ may, according to the custom ever received in the Catholic Church, render, in veneration to this most holy sacrament, the worship of *latria*, which is due to the true God. . . For we believe that same God to be present therein of whom the Eternal Father, when introducing him into the world, says: "And let all the angels of God worship him." . . The holy synod further declares, that very piously and religiously was this custom introduced

into the church, that this sublime and venerable sacrament be celebrated every year, on some peculiar festival day, with special veneration and solemnity; and that it be borne reverently and with honor in procession through the streets and public places.[1]

I have often been present at what is called "the elevation of the host," when the priest holds up the consecrated wafer to be adored by the people, and in Naples I once saw an immense congregation fall upon their knees as one man at the sound of the little bell that proclaimed the miracle to be completed and the Saviour to be present on the altar.

But in order to avail for sins the Saviour must be sacrificed, and so the Council of Trent declares:

Forasmuch as in the divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross—the holy synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory.[2]

If any one shall say that the sacrifice of the mass is only (a eucharistic) one of praise and thanksgiving, or that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not propitiatory, or that it is profitable only to the partaker, and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead—for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be accursed.[3]

All this was necessary, of course, in order to justify the errors into which the church had already fallen, and to give them great importance in the eyes of the people, as being stamped with the seal and authority of the infallible church.

This then is what the Church of Rome teaches, and what millions have believed concerning the mass.

"It would make one's eyes to run down with rivers of tears and his very heart to bleed," exclaimed the celebrated Doctor Beson in a sermon preached in 1745, "to read what havoc this one article of transubstantiation hath made among mankind. How many myriads of innocent and harmless

[1] Decree, Chap. V., "Eucharist."
[2] Chap. II., "Sacrifice of the Mass." [3] Canon III.

men, women, and children have been sacrificed to this devouring idol."

No other service in the Catholic Church is so important and so oft repeated as the mass, and it probably gives more employment to the priests and a larger income to the church than all other sources together.

The average sum has been reckoned as about one hundred and fifty million francs, or thirty million dollars, yearly.

As a rule a priest can celebrate only one mass a day, though in special cases the pope has the power to double the number. These masses are all paid for, the usual price ranging from fifty cents to one dollar, though hundreds of dollars are sometimes given by the rich.

Since the Church of Rome claims that the mass is an expiatory sacrifice for sin, it being nothing less than the entire Christ offered anew, one might naturally suppose that this sacrifice would be offered for sin only. But such is not the case in Italy, where the mass has degenerated into a kind of talisman. A mother will order a mass for the restoration of her sick child ; a peasant for an abundant harvest ; a man about to undertake a long journey that he may return home safe and sound ; a shepherd that his flocks may increase and multiply ; a man of affairs, whatever may be the character of his business, that he may be successful and prosperous. The priest may or may not know the purpose for which the mass has been ordered, the purchaser not being required to declare his intention. The one thing demanded under all circumstances is the money, or its equivalent. A country priest can often make a better bargain when the people pay for their masses in kind.

A gentleman who was present at the famous annual tournament or races in Siena, related to me that on entering the cathedral he was astonished to find the winning horse, gayly caparisoned, standing before the altar, while the priest was "saying mass" for him, hundreds of people being present to

witness the ceremony. And the Romish Church teaches that what the priest offered for that horse was the entire Christ, body, soul, and divinity, a true expiatory sacrifice. Comment is useless.

It is lamentably true that the mass, so high and sacred in its original design, in Italy has been reduced to a mere traffic, and sometimes people and priest will haggle over the price as they would over any object of merchandise. Masses may be and are offered for the living, but it has come to pass that not less than nine-tenths, perhaps, are offered for the dead, that is, for souls supposed to be in purgatory. Prayers for the dead are very common in Italy, and many would feel that they were neglecting a most sacred duty did they fail to pray for their loved ones who have died.

Just after a funeral I have often seen above the door of the church a large frame containing these words: "Pray for the soul of ——," giving the name of the person recently deceased. Such requests are very common, and are usually placed near the altar, where they can easily be seen by the people. In one case I found such a request for a man who had been dead more than four hundred years. Sometimes the request reads thus: "Pray for the soul of ——, that he may be delivered from the pains of purgatory."

According to the teachings of the Romish Church the very best Christians are liable to spend long years in the tortures of purgatory, this being necessary for their perfection and preparation for heaven. The Council of Trent declared:

> If any one saith, that after the grace of justification has been received, the guilt of every penitent sinner is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out, in such wise that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged, either in this world (by penance), or in the next, in purgatory, before the entrance into the kingdom of heaven can be opened to him, let him be accursed (Conv. 30th).

The Book of Wisdom, which the Catholic Church accounts canonical, says: "But the souls of the righteous are in the

hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction, but they are in peace" (Wisdom 3 : 1–3). We read in the Revelation : "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours" (Rev. 14 : 13). The Greek word for "labours" here is *κόπων*, which strictly means "beatings," and then any kind of hard toil or suffering. And yet the Church of Rome speaks of pious souls being "tortured (*cruciatæ*) in the fire of purgatory."

Of course when the Bible and the church conflict, as in this case, every Catholic is expected to stand by his church. This idea has been so carefully and persistently inculcated in this country, that the masses of the people are utterly ignorant of that fundamental Protestant doctrine, the supreme authority of the Scriptures. It is easy to see why the Catholic Church cannot accept such a doctrine, and why she insists on putting the pope and the church above the Bible.

The doctrine of purgatory being admitted, it is the most natural thing in the world that the people should avail themselves of prayers, of penance, and of anything else recommended by the church to shorten one's own stay, or the stay of loved ones, in its fearful flames. Purgatory and the mass are inseparably connected, for the Romish Church teaches that the sacrifice of the mass, as propitiatory for the sins of the living and the dead, is the chief means of relieving the souls of those who have died, and of lifting them out of purgatory into paradise. Prayers and penance may accomplish something, but there are single masses which have more value than years of penance. This of course places the poor at a great disadvantage, while the rich are favored beyond all reason.

The Church of Rome is now in possession of millions of

endowed or perpetual masses, which have been left by the rich as an atonement for their sins, and to shorten their stay in purgatory. A man, for example, on making his will, leaves a given sum to the Church with the understanding that so many masses will be offered every year for his soul. The Church accepts the property, promising to fulfill the conditions *in perpetuo*. These masses have been accumulating for centuries, and the necessary result is that many of them are never celebrated, partly because of the limited number of priests, and partly because labor paid for several centuries in advance will almost certainly be left undone.

There are also masses which are called in Italian *avventizie*, such as are celebrated at funerals, festivals, and other special occasions, and those that are brought by the people to the sacristy, to be recorded in the church books, the money being paid on the spot. Then there are also the *manuali*, which are not registered, but are given directly into the hands of the confessor, or some other priest, who may celebrate them or not. Sometimes a favorite confessor will receive many more masses than he can possibly celebrate, and instead of turning the surplus over to the other priests, he will pocket the money and leave the masses unsaid.

De Sanctis tells of a confessor in Rome who had rendered himself so popular with the people that they overwhelmed him with masses every day, and though he came to Rome with nothing except his Breviary under his arm, in the course of time he lived in an elegant palace, the result of the thousands of masses he had yearly received. The poor, ignorant people who had trusted him never stopped to consider that by putting so many masses into the hands of their confessor, only a small fraction of which he could possibly "say," they were enriching him at their own expense, encouraging in him a spirit of greed and hypocrisy, and depriving their loved ones in purgatory of the blessing intended for them. Nor is this by any means a solitary example, the same having oc-

curred many times in Italy, with what effect on priest and people one can easily imagine.

An ex-confessor once told me of an aged priest who confessed to him that he had received and appropriated the money for more than five thousand masses which he had never celebrated. As he stood trembling on the verge of the grave, his conscience was not at ease, and he dared not die without confession and absolution. The young confessor, realizing the gravity of the situation, as he himself informed me, referred the case to Rome. The Vatican authorities, being adepts in all such matters, found no difficulty in solving the problem. The aged priest was required to undergo a severe penance before he could be absolved and reinstated. But those five thousand masses, which the donors had paid for on condition that they would be celebrated at once, and placed to their own credit, or to the credit of their loved ones in purgatory? This too was remedied without difficulty. A special *messone*, or chanted mass, was celebrated in Rome in place of the five thousand, the defaulting priest being required to pay the expenses, and the accounts were balanced.

This remedy was long ago discovered by some astute ecclesiastic, and at once received the sanction and the official seal of the pope. It has often proved most convenient, and is well calculated to relieve an embarrassing situation. This *messone* will apply to all kinds of masses. If a church or monastery has in its possession a greater number of masses than can be celebrated during the year, instead of sending them to another church, the superior may apply to the pope, or to the "Holy Congregation of Bishops," who act for him, offering to pay liberally for a *messone*, and all is right.

It is said that once the abbot of San Lorenzo, a church just outside the walls of Rome, having received five hundred dollars for five hundred masses, and wishing to satisfy the conditions with a *messone*, applied to Pope Pius VI. for the

same. The pope replied that he would celebrate the *messone* himself, and that he might be expected at the abbott's church the next morning. Having finished his task, to the surprise and distress of the abbot, his holiness demanded the entire five hundred dollars.

Masses are sometimes farmed out to the lower clergy. A church or society having in its possession more masses than can be celebrated, will place them with other priests at reduced rates, often less than half the original value. Sometimes it is necessary to employ an agent for this purpose, who is entrusted with a given sum of money, and is expected to place the masses as cheaply as possible. Sometimes this money gets no farther than the agent's pocket, and the masses are never celebrated. This fact has been proved by more than one scandalous trial before the courts in France.

The cases have been of this sort: Certain of the Parisian clergy, having contracted to say an enormous number of masses, amounting to a couple of hundred thousand, found that the work simply could not be got through, and instead of saying so and returning the money, arranged with a middleman to farm out a large proportion of them to country priests at a lower rate of pay per mass, so as to leave a margin of profit to the original contractors and a commission for the agent. It was shown by a couple of lawsuits that the agent had not carried out his part of the engagement, but had simply pocketed the money, no masses had been said (though in other instances the process of sub-letting was carried on, ending in the masses being said for the barest pittance by starving curates), and the customers had been defrauded on a very large scale. Imagine the working of a system which thus makes possible a Glasgow bank fraud in the spiritual world, affecting in the profoundest way the agonized souls of the departed and the feelings of the sorrowing kindred, that the future condition of souls which Christ died to ransom should be thus at the mercy of any grasping priest or swindling commission agent.[1]

A monk once informed me that during a great country festival, lasting through several days, he and his companions would secure not less than a thousand masses, which would

[1] "Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome," p. 110

furnish employment to three monks, at one mass a day, throughout the whole year. A few such festivals would suffice to give a year's employment to the entire monastery.

Masses have become a sort of currency among the priests, easily available for all church dues. A priest, for example, who wishes to secure a dispensation for reading forbidden books, or an indulgence of any kind, instead of sending the money required for these purposes, on making the application will offer to say a certain number of masses, at reduced rates of course. I have seen it stated that the income of the procurator general of the Capuchin monks in the province of Rome once amounted to six thousand dollars yearly for masses alone. Most of these masses were disposed of at greatly reduced rates to the poor monks of the province, they being paid, not in money, but in dispensations, graces, indulgences, and other ecclesiastical coin. One might laugh were it not for the extreme seriousness of these facts.

In the same way many priests pay for their church paper, both subscribers and editors preferring this to the hard cash, as being more profitable to both parties.

Another sad abuse is mentioned by De Sanctis.[1] On special festival days thousands of peasants from the Campagna congregate at certain points in Rome, especially in Campo de' Fiori, and Piazza Montanara. Scarcely one per cent. of these peasants can read, and most of them are very bigoted and superstitious. During the days of the papal supremacy certain priests could be seen at every festival circulating among the crowd, well supplied with crosses, medals, and charms of various kinds, which they were selling to the poor peasants, assuring them that they had been blessed by the pope. At every favorable opportunity they would introduce the subject of purgatory, and exhort the people to purchase masses for their loved ones who were there, offering at the same time, in proof of their own sympathy and good will,

[1] "*Roma Papale*," pp. 250, 251.

to celebrate these masses at greatly reduced rates. In this way many masses were secured at each festival. Whether these masses were ever celebrated only the last day will reveal. The presumptive evidence is unfavorable. Who can read such things without a shudder? And yet they are the natural outcome of the Romish system.

Recently an Italian gentleman said to me: "Religion in the Roman Catholic Church is reduced to hearing mass, which no one understands." To me it is always sad to see a great congregation going mechanically through the long Latin service, and dispersing to their homes without a word of truly comforting and saving instruction. And yet this is the sad and universal situation in Italy, a situation which all will admit, which thousands deplore, but which no one seems capable of correcting.

CHAPTER XXIX

THROUGH ITALIAN SPECTACLES

AFTER all, the severest judges of Romanism are Italians themselves. To secure the opinion of a few, I sent the following questions to several pastors, begging them to respond very briefly.

1. How much of the Romanism of to-day in Italy is conformed to the word of God? I do not mean the Romanism which is sometimes found in the books, but that which the priests teach the people.

2. What are the material, intellectual, moral, and spiritual fruits of Romanism?

3. What is the character of the priests; their habits, their sincerity in what they teach; and how many of them are true examples of what a pastor ought to be?

4. What is the attitude of the Romish Church toward the Bible?

5. Is there, or is there not, a spirit of intolerance and persecution in the Church of Rome, and where it exists, what is the motive for it?

6. Is there hope of a radical reform in the Romish Church?

In answer to these questions, Rev. Gaetano Fasulo, pastor in Naples, responded as follows:

DEAR MR. EAGER.—To reply fully to your questions would require a volume, but I shall briefly give my opinion.

1. In the Romish Church there are two doctrines, the official and the practical. The theory is one thing, the practice is another. I believe that the doctrine of the Trinity alone is to-day conformed to the word of God, every other doctrine of the Romish Church being more or less out of harmony therewith.

2. The fruits are of the worst kind from every point of view: misery, ignorance, general immorality, and religious indifference.

3. The chief and common characteristic is egotism. (The exceptions, which are very rare, do not count.) Their habits are very bad, especially because of forced celibacy; their knowledge of the Bible is almost nothing; as to their sincerity, in private to one person alone they do not hes-

itate to declare themselves unbelievers, but in public they are bigots. They teach the Catechism. One example alone of what a true pastor ought to be is found in Victor Hugo's famous "*Misérables*," and he even allows an official lie. In this matter of priests, we can only speak of bad and worse. Would that I could justly be accused of pessimism on this subject.

4. The priests know that the Bible condemns their system, and for this reason they condemn the Bible absolutely. Instead of submitting to its oracles, they pretend that it should submit to their errors, and hence they wrest it to their destruction. They avoid discussion as they would a pest, and when they are forced into one, they treat the Bible, as Luther says, in the same way that a sow treats a sack of beans, turning it upside down, and taking this and leaving that, as best suits their convenience.

5. Religious intolerance has been, is, and will be a characteristic of all religions which do not come from the true God, and even in the Christian religion this will be the case, when, for worldly ends, it becomes a religion of the State. Circumstances may modify the form of the persecutions, but not extinguish them altogether. When the Church of Rome was omnipotent she prepared the stake even for persons of rank, and she took kingdoms from sovereigns as a master would dismiss his servants. Now that her power is less among us in Italy, especially since 1860, persecution and intolerance are more veiled and less severe, but not less hurtful. Workmen lose their employment if they attend our meetings; families are sent away from their homes, the clerical landlord being unwilling to renew the rent contract; another becomes a victim of slander, or an effort is made to bring one into disrepute in the community, etc. So long as the Church of Rome claims to be infallible she must persecute. The chief motive is her right to exist. If the gospel penetrates the masses, Catholicism inevitably dies. Therefore, *Mors tua, vita mea.*

6. A serious reform in the Romish Church can never be hoped for, because in its very nature it is unreformable. The reason is given by Guerrazzi Asino (not Guerazzi, the historian), page 179, edition of Lugano, 1860: "The government of the Church of Rome is an old arch built of brick, without lime. Woe to him who shakes a brick! He runs the risk of having all the others fall in a ruin on his head." Take away therefore the smallest Catholic dogma, and the whole of Catholicism will fall. That which is said of Jesuitism is applicable to the whole of Romanism. *Sit aut est, aut non sit.*

These are in brief my ideas on the questions you sent me, and I trust they are not altogether inconclusive.

Devotedly in Christ,

GAETANO FASULO.

NAPLES, June 26, 1893.

The following response was received from Signor Nardi Greco, pastor in Genoa :

DEAR MR. EAGER.—After some delay I send an answer to your letter. My seeming indolence was caused by the death of our dear little girl. My response to your six questions is very brief, and you may use it as you like. What I send you is my opinion ; others may think as they like.

1. It is very difficult to give an exact answer to this question. However, considering the fact that Catholics do not at all (*per nulla*) know the Bible and that they allow themselves to be guided with closed eyes by the priests, who have travestied the doctrines of the Bible, we may say that Romanism in little or nothing is conformed to the gospel. Even the doctrines which Catholicism holds in common with evangelicals, as, for example, the Trinity, the fall, expiation through Christ, justification, regeneration, eternal life, etc., are falsified by other doctrines opposed to revelation. To the heavenly Trinity, the earthly trinity has been added ; to the expiation of Christ, that of Mary, the co-redeemer, and the merits of the saints ; to gratuitous justification by faith, that which is obtained by works ; for regeneration by the Holy Spirit, that by baptism has been substituted ; and eternal life is obtained through indulgences, through the pardon which the priest gives, and through the intercession of the saints.

2. From every point of view they are bad. Effects are equal to the cause from which they emanate. From a bad tree good fruit cannot be gathered. With no just conception of true salvation and holiness, the standard of morality is altogether falsified, that of spirituality is debased, ignorance, encrusted with a thousand superstitions, is dense, and, as a consequence, society suffers even in its material interests. If we reflect well on this point, we shall find at least three subversive maxims which Romanism holds as fundamental : First, that faith is ignorance, hence war upon science and learning ; second, that every means is good, provided the end be good, and from this results a jesuitical code of morals which authorizes evil ; third, that good works possess a merit which compensates for evil deeds, hence there are famous saints who recite the rosary at home, who hear mass every day, and who defraud society.

3. The priests, as a class, cannot be sincere. Of many of them it is said openly that, in order to live, they are compelled to use pious frauds and to recommend precepts which they themselves cannot believe. They bear the character of men who deceive and lie, and their daily life is thoroughly out of harmony with the holy gospel. If, however, under certain circumstances they are exceedingly affable, this is not the effect

of goodness of heart, but of refined hypocrisy, in order the better to deceive. The priests in general know the Bible, when they understand Latin, only in so far as they find it in the Missal and the Breviary. As to whether there are among them any examples of what true pastors ought to be, we may say yes and no. According to the system of Catholicism there are those who fill the office of true Catholic pastors; but, observed attentively in the light of the gospel, they are true "hirelings and thieves." *A planta pedis usque ad verticem capitis non est in eo sanitas!*

4. What is the attitude of Romanism toward the Bible? Why, just the attitude of the night thief toward the light of the full moon! The priest, as a legitimate and natural consequence, is hostile to the word of God. It ought not to surprise us if not a few popes have hurled anathemas against Bible societies, when we reflect that the worst enemy of the papacy is the word of God.

5. To answer this question one needs only to consult history. The victims of Roman fanaticism may be counted by the million, and the larger part of the slain whom John saw under the altar and who were crying to the Lamb for vengeance, were sacrificed by the Romish priesthood. It is on account of the iniquity of the times (?) that the Church of Rome cannot in these days display her zeal. If the times should change, could no other fuel be found, she would use the very crucifixes from off the altar with which to burn us. What is the motive? The fanaticism of error. Error in its very nature is intolerant, bloodthirsty. It is not true that philosophy alone is free from blood. Philosophy (*i. e.*, the negation of the supernatural) has never been in the majority, and yet it cannot assert that it has never been stained with blood. It had one moment of triumph (I speak of 1793), and the executioner grew tired of his bloody task. Error cannot sustain itself except by force. The secular arm must stand *ad nutum* of the spiritual power.

6. Is there hope of a radical reform in Romanism? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" In like manner can the Romish Church, accustomed to do evil, learn to do well? Humanly speaking, nothing leads us to hope that Romanism can accept a radical, or even a superficial reform; but rather the indications are diametrically opposed to such an idea. The Church of Rome hopes to Romanize England, North America, Switzerland, Germany, the whole world. "Catholicism or eternal death!" is her cry. But that which is impossible with men is possible with God. Even the priests have a conscience,—seared, corrupted, dead, it is true; but God can raise the dead. He has said: "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry

land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it" (Isaiah 41 : 18–20).

Yours devotedly,

NARDI GRECO.

GENOA, July 28, 1893

Signor Ribetti, the Waldensian pastor in Turin, wrote as follows:

ESTEEMED SIR AND DEAR BROTHER: My duties at present are such that I cannot answer fully your questions, but must limit myself to a few words:

1. The three phases of Roman Catholicism, that of the people, that of the theologians, and that which may be called official, are all three the antipodes of the word of God. In the church of the pope Mariolatry has taken the place of Christianity. The apostolic symbol is, for the priests, a false emblem by means of which they furtively lead the people to accept their doctrines, rites, etc.

2. The papacy is more and more the religion of the *Credo quia absurdum*. It darkens and stupefies the faculties. By putting the confessor in the place of the individual conscience, it weakens and paralyzes and corrupts the conscience. Besides, the *morale* of the confessor is nothing else than the casuistry of the Jesuit Liguori, which is taught in the theological seminaries. Therefore, immorality reigns in those countries where the papal religion is that of the majority, and especially when it dominates without opposition.

3. As to the priests, after the proclamation of the Infallibility of the Pope in the Vatican Council of 1870, unless they wish to be suspended *in divinis*, they must absolutely abstain from having any individuality. More than ever they are now *instruments* in the hands of the bishops, who, in turn, are instruments in the hands of the pope and nothing more. Even the cardinals, on receiving the red hat, must swear to maintain and defend with all their power the temporal (in the pretended patrimony of St. Peter's) and spiritual rights of the pope; they must hold themselves ready to *persecute* heretics, schismatics, etc. If in these days the Church of Rome does not imprison, torture, and kill her adversaries, and especially and above all, evangelicals, it is because she cannot. The wild beast is chained. We hear his roars, but, thanks to God, he

can no longer tear us in pieces. But if to-morrow she had the power to do it, the Church of Rome would torture, burn, and kill as in past centuries.

4. As to the attitude of the Romish Church toward the Bible, there is no change. Her attitude is just the same. The Church of Rome cannot love the word of God which condemns her. As a consequence she prohibits the reading of it. She is logical.

5. I see that I have already answered your fifth question concerning the intolerance of the Romish Church, which will cease to exist when it ceases to be intolerant. Intolerance and tyranny are her life. Liberty and the Romish Church are like water and fire, they cannot exist long together.

6. I have always believed that the Church of Rome is in such a position that reform is impossible. In proof of this we may refer to the great Reformatory Councils of Pisa, in 1409; of Constance, in 1414; of Basle, in 1431. Other proofs may be found in the efforts of Savonarola, of Arnaldo da Brescia, of Wickliff, of John Huss, of Père Hyacinthe, of Döllinger, of Herzog, of Ranke, etc., etc. With respect to the morality of the Roman clergy, I shall tell you what I heard from the lips of Père Hyacinthe. One day, while he was still loved and esteemed by the French bishops, a friend of his, a bishop, told him that Pius IX. had once assured him that according to the information he had been able to obtain, only about three priests out of a hundred respected, even outwardly, their vow of chastity. The reformation of the Romish Church, therefore, is a thing impossible, a *Utopia*.

We must ask God to destroy the Romish Church, just as the apostles asked him to destroy pagan idolatry, and to draw souls to Christ and to his gospel.

Affectionately,

Yours in Christ,

G. RIBETTI.

TURIN, June 27, 1893.

In considering the question of Romanism surely the opinions of such men cannot be set aside, and ought not to be lightly esteemed. Re-read and ponder them.

CHAPTER XXX

THROUGH ITALIAN SPECTACLES (CONTINUED)

IN answer to a letter asking for facts and reflections which might be useful to American readers, Signor Damiano Borgia, pastor in Milan and president of the Committee of Evangelization in the Evangelical Church of Italy, sent in the following :

CAUSES AND EFFECTS.

It is a painful fact that Jesuitism has succeeded in persuading many in England, and very many in America, that Romanism, *i. e.*, the religion of the Vatican in Rome, in spite of great defects, possesses nevertheless a spirit of Christian charity, a truly evangelical doctrine, and a spiritual form of worship ; in short, that it is a church altogether conformed to the teaching of Jesus Christ. It is strange, indeed, that a celebrated man like Dr. Philip Schaff, in addressing the Ninth International Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, held in Florence, in April, 1891, should use such words as the following : "A return to the ages of persecution for conscience' sake is impossible—in Italy." "Every Italian is free to worship God according to his honest convictions." "Love ought to move us toward our brethren of the Roman Catholic faith, who, after all, believe in the same Almighty Father, the same Saviour, the same Holy Spirit, and expect as we do to be saved by the blood of expiation." "The Catholic Church even to-day is full of missionary zeal and abnegation, and abounds in works of love. She embraces millions of true worshipers and followers of Christ, and is still capable of conferring unlimited blessings."

Ah ! Would to God that these things were so ! Then not only would the reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants proposed by Doctor Schaff be possible, but from this hour all evangelical missionaries and missions would be useless in my dear Italy ; and, in fact, what are so many preachers of the gospel doing here if the Catholic Church teaches the truth, and her people believe in the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Holy Spirit, and are all true worshipers and followers of Christ?

But how is it possible to make such blunders ?

Let our dear English and American friends come to Italy, and for the

love they bear the truth let them study Romanism, not in a Catholic Basilica, among the great monuments, in the Catacombs, in the libraries, etc., but let them come with me or with one of my colleagues in the work of Italian evangelization, let them go from city to city, from town to town, from house to house, and they will then see whether in modern Catholicism the same spirit does not reign which led the Church of the Vatican into bloody *vendetta*, into violent measures of every kind, and into crimes the most execrable and atrocious. They will see whether that same church is not still capable of such evil doing, and if the times permitted it, whether she would not again reduce us to the same slavery of thought, of word, and of conscience as in ages past.

If the fundamental principle of the Romish Church is pride and absolute authority in religion and politics, if all are convinced that the Church of Rome is the declared enemy of the gospel of Christ, and persecutes even now those who are faithful to the truth, how is it that some will come even to us here in Italy to praise the Christian virtues of Romanism, while, as a result of the intrigues of the priest and of the entire clerical horde, we are every day persecuted and our life is constantly exposed to danger?

But who does not know that the Catholic religion is vitiated in its canons, and that it has become the servant of a caste both greedy and proud and blinded by an ungovernable lust for dominion, a caste which, after having cast behind its back both Christ and his gospel, tramples with feet of iron upon fellow-citizens and strangers, friends and enemies, family and country?

No, the Romish Church will always be what it has been. It cannot change its character. Should it change it would be no longer the church of the Roman Pontiff. The times are changed, yes, and for this reason we do not now behold the frightful measures of the past ages. Nevertheless, the Church of Rome ever looks backward without a lament for the crimes committed and the blood shed; but the rather she desires, hopes, and prays that those blessed times may return.

In the meantime, while the church is waiting for these blessed times, and that she may again have the support of the secular arm here in Italy, she is constantly persecuting evangelicals, and the days are rare in which here and there sad facts cannot be recorded. I need not speak of the long series of persecutions in Fara Novarese, where evangelicals were many times pursued with stones and revolvers; when a young man had his arm and chest-bone broken; when every sort of violence was committed, even to casting into prison an innocent father of a family, false witnesses being hired for the purpose. Let us pass over the case of poor Prina of Carpignano; Sesia, who was dragged out into the fields by

night and beaten to death and left in a ditch in the mud; and also the case of Berlucchi, in a town near Stradella, who, returning home after having preached the gospel, was followed by some peasants who stoned him and beat him, and supposing he was dead cast him into a ditch and fled. I shall say nothing of the massacre of Barletta[1] which occurred on March 19, 1865. I shall only mention that in 1885 an attempt was made in Bergamo during Lent to burn the pastor's dwelling and the church while Signor Mazzetti, the evangelist, was preparing to hold a religious service, and that to prevent a massacre and a conflagration it was necessary to send for the gendarmes and the cavalry.

Yes, liberty of conscience is enjoyed in Italy; but side by side walks persecution, and by many it is procured at a dear price. In proof of this let us look at a few very recent examples. Take the case of Mondini of Cusago, near Milan, who was driven from his home by his own parents because he had become an evangelical. The same thing happened to another youth here in Milan because he was a regular attendant at our meetings. Another young man, a student of the Lyceum, embraces the gospel, "worships God according to his honest convictions," but on hearing it the priest informed his parents, who immediately put before their son this dilemma: "Renounce the gospel and the evangelical church, or leave home never to come back." Enough! At this rate the litany of these facts would be too long.

Behold the fruits of that evil tree, the Church of Rome! Behold how we are treated in Italy by our much-praised Roman Catholic brethren who are supposed to be "true worshipers of God and followers of Christ"!

Ah, yes! come to Italy and we will make a journey together; we will go to Seregno with Signor Silva, for example. But before doing this read the correspondence published by "*L'Italia del Popolo*" and by "*La Lombardia*," of June 28, 29, 1892,[2] and see how we were received on June 24 by the people of Seregno, viz, with desperate cries of, "Kill them!" "Death to the Freemasons!" etc., while they followed us for more than half a mile beyond the town with a tempest of stones. It was indeed good for us that we were able to enter a tram which was providentially passing at that moment, otherwise I do not see how I could be here to-day writing these lines. Behold again the fruits of the Romish Church! "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7: 15–20).

Let this be the seal which may undeceive every man.

DAMIANO BORGIA.

MILAN, July 19, 1892.

[1] See page 92.

[2] See Addenda, p. 278.

The following appeared in the telegraphic column of "*La Tribuna,*" of Rome, one of the chief dailies of Italy:

RELIGIOUS FANATICISM.

NAPLES, September 11, 4 P. M., 1893.

A base example of religious fanaticism has just occurred in the neighboring town of Secondigliano. A worthy gentleman of the place, Signor Giustino di Nocera, had married an evangelical, to whom he promised that after a little while he would have the religious ceremony performed according to the rites of her church. Very unexpectedly Signor di Nocera was taken seriously ill, and the other evening he was at the point of death. He asked for the consolations of religion and the parish priest was called. He stopped in the room adjoining that where the sick one lay, and insisted that the dying man must sign a contract, binding himself, in case of recovery, not to live with his Protestant wife, but instead to drive her from the house. It was impossible to induce the priest to assist the dying man, who soon after expired. The fanatical priest was not even willing to bless the corpse, and he ordered the church to be closed and the bells to be tied so that they could not be tolled. The local clergy refused to accompany the corpse to the grave. The affair has produced a serious scandal.

Many quotations equally severe on the Romish clergy could be cited from the principal daily papers of Italy.

Signor O. Golia-Mauro, Waldensian pastor in Girgenti, Sicily, in writing to "The Christian" of September 14, 1893, after speaking of the dreadful condition of Grotte, a neighboring town, says:

What influence in this republic of immorality have the Roman Catholic priests and their church? None, unless for the worse, and to such a point that now the people believe nothing and speak only to accuse them of scandals. Indeed, all know that each has one at least, if not two, concubines, and their venality, as usurers and traders in mass for the souls in purgatory,[1] forms a large part of general conversation, as well as that they are priests simply for a living. One of them, who lives openly in sin and ridicules the pretended miracle of the mass, was asked: "But why are you a priest?" "Oh," he replied, "it is a trade like any other." This same priest I have seen direct the procession of St.

[1] See Chapter XXIII.

Joseph. The one carried in triumph and religiously adored by the multitude as the husband of the Virgin Mary was the old road-sweeper, who an hour after was dragging himself quite drunk along the street, and with his indecent buffoonery making those laugh who before had worshiped him as a saint. It is in such surroundings that our little church with its forty-six members detaches itself from all superstition and corruption.

The average Christian at home cannot possibly appreciate the peculiar circumstances under which evangelicals are called upon to pursue their labors in this land.

On the morning of September 27, 1893, an editorial appeared in "*La Tribuna*," of Rome, which contained the following:

We are not one of those who believe in the necessity of a kind of hydrophobia against everything sacerdotal, and who would turn the tables and establish a kind of inquisitorial tribunal against priests, monks, and prelates. But not for anything in the world would we see the conviction weakened in the minds of Italian patriots that the natural ally of our every foreign enemy, a perpetual conspirer against our welfare, and more dangerous than every outside foe because of her arts, her moral influence over the masses, and the strategic position she occupies in this country, is the Vatican . . . ever in arms against the country, ever fertile in insidious arts against liberty, ever organically the enemy of civilization.

In his address before the Ninth General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, held in Florence in April, 1891, on "The Obstacles to Reformation in Italy," Professor Comba, of the Waldensian Theological Seminary in Florence, said:

Even such a man as Savonarola declared his desire to disarm the power of Rome. His martyrdom showed that it would be vain to hope to reform the church without destroying its unity. It was the passion for unity which led to the enormous persecutions of the Huguenots. . . Roman unity is the guardian angel of the Catholic faith. . . It was the testimony of the German Reformers, when they visited Italy, that our people were blasphemous and depraved, and Calvin exhorted our martyrs to give an example of sincerity to "a crooked and perverse nation." Such were the obstacles to reformation three centuries ago. And now

let us note the fact that all such obstacles are centered in the papacy. Every one knows that the political obstacle was impersonated there. And the ecclesiastical obstacle is now seen more than ever to be identified with Roman usurpation, which received its coronation in the dogma of Infallibility. The moral obstacle was also there. Machiavelli said: "The people nearest the Roman Church have the least religion. If we follow the example of the church and of Italian priests, we shall be irreligious and wicked." And the worst feature of the case was that the pope was regarded as bearing all the "responsibility." The people saw no necessity to repent.

Worldly ambition in the church covered it with infamy and error. . . And is there any hope that the Romish Church will be reformed and that the unity which is a unity of mere appearance will yet be broken up? No. . . The Roman Catholic will rather remain where he was born than separate and isolate himself from others, even though the tower of his unity be a tower of Babel. . . Morally the situation is decidedly improved. . . But there are many witnesses who could be called to show that still there is a sad moral defect. When Father Curci found little response to his zeal in translating and publishing the New Testament, he said: "The Christian conscience is more than half destroyed, and it is only through divine mercy that any portion of it remains." . . So far as the Catholic reform is concerned, it moves in a vicious circle. All change must be subordinated to Roman unity, to the papacy.

Is reform to be expected in the head and therefore in the members? Only those who are obstinately blind to history will believe that Catholic reform is sincere. The ideals of that church are expressed in doctrines of which only blind eyes cannot see the absurdity. Some have entertained the hope that Italy will be saved from the dualism which is destroying it by a reform originating in a Catholic sphere and cleansing its seat, so spreading through the country, bringing the papacy within limits. But the hope is not sound. We shall never see the Catholic school rise to the ideals of a new life. It has not the moral and intellectual independence which the time as well as the dignity of man demands. It is owing to Roman Catholicism that Italy is in the state of moral weakness in which it is. It is the Evangelical church which must supply the want.

Doctor Mariano, of the University of Naples, in addressing the same conference on "Religious Thought in Italy,"[1] said:

[1] See "Christendom from the Standpoint of Italy," pp. 51–58.

With the sacraments reduced to mechanical acts, with purgatory and pecuniary offerings to be free from it, with festivals, indulgences, jubilees, pilgrimages, relics, miracles, adoration of saints and madonnas, Romanism has inoculated in the Christian religion the forms of a magical and idolatrous naturalism. . . And the worst of all is that Romanism makes the sacerdotal hierarchy the only and indispensable mediator of the religious and moral life. The atonement of Christ and the repentance of the sinner become a monopoly of the priests. . . From all this we must conclude that Romanism is the very opposite of that duty which distinguishes the human soul. . . This religion may have had its days of glory and usefulness, but it has now become a pure formalism. It has no power over the morals of the people; it does not attract or educate or edify the masses, but simply holds them under its sway by force of habit, by inert traditionalism, and its ultimate result can only be ignorant credulity in the midst of ignorant incredulity. . .

And yet we must not be too severe on this miserable religious conscience of the Italian people, for when did the leading classes take the trouble of illuminating and raising it up? It pains me to have to confess it: the religious condition of the upper classes in Italy is much more troubled than that of the common people. With a few honorable exceptions, they present to us a large army of minds whose existence is a perpetual moral somnolence; unable to believe, they have not enough moral strength to disbelieve anything seriously. They are Catholics for social convenience and opportunism. They boast that they have minds strong and free; but whilst they attack religion, they send their children to Jesuit schools. They have no convictions, and laugh at everything; but you see them on every occasion ordering masses and priestly funerals. They deride the priest, but in the solemn moments of life they throw themselves, body and soul, into the arms of the clergy. . .

And what of the clergy? Here, indeed, Romanism has worked the greatest destruction. Under the whip of the papal system our clergy now lies prostrate in a senile and servile lethargy, which deadens mind and soul. It is enough to enter a Roman Catholic church to perceive that the faith and the religiosity of the priests themselves have become deadened and mummified in formalism and outward rites. The ignorance and the haziness in which they rejoice it is easier to deplore than to measure. With a few remarkable exceptions, their studies are such a mean, sterile, and decrepit thing that we can quite understand the saying of a Bavarian schoolmaster: "A drop of holy water is better than all philosophy." The despotic power of the hierarchy, centered in the pope, has caused the priesthood to become morally apathetic, and to turn their eyes from heavenly to earthly things. Enforced celibacy is the reason

why immorality and hypocrisy have become the dominant traits of their lives. . .

As to the political problem, what an illusion to think it solved by our going to Rome! Let us rather say that the problem has been formulated on the very day we entered Rome, for Europe, which recognizes at present our right to stay there, might deny it to-morrow. Rome is not a town to be stormed with artillery. It is a system, a faith, a religion. Against the dangers of a religion we can only be insured by religion. *Will the Italians have the wisdom and the courage to turn their backs on the spiritual authority of the pope? That is the important point. Then, and only then, our right to Rome will be respected.*

And when this comes to pass, then we may indeed lift up our heads and rejoice, assured that the time of Italy's redemption draweth nigh!

CONCLUSION

WHAT, now, is the conclusion of the whole matter? If fact means anything, then we are obliged to confess that Italy is still virtually without the gospel and greatly in need of missionary effort.

How strange this sounds in our ears! Italy, where Paul preached, where myriads of martyrs have died for the truth; Italy, the home and headquarters of a great ecclesiastical organization, calling itself *par excellence* the Christian Church of the world, with thousands of magnificent churches, and tens of thousands of religious teachers; Italy, that might have given the gospel to the world, is to-day missionary ground. Spiritually the great mass of the people are like sheep without a shepherd, wandering they know not whither, amidst innumerable dangers and pitfalls, with none to rescue and guide. The people are perishing "for lack of knowledge," and those famishing ones, whose souls are hungering for the bread of life, instead of bread receive a stone. The people have been fed on husks, and not on the true grain. Drugs that poison and opiates that deaden have been administered instead of genuine medicines, and fables and doctrines of human invention have been substituted for the word of God.

Well might an Italian Jeremiah cry out: "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. . . Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them? . . . They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. . . They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is

no peace. . . Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? . . . Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

A second conclusion seems equally evident, and it is this: The Romish Church will never give Italy the gospel.

The cardinals and bishops and priests are so occupied with political material and purely ecclesiastical matters that they have little time or disposition to give any serious thought to the spiritual welfare of the people. After all, how can one give what he does not possess? Who looks to the Romish Church in Italy for the gospel looks in vain. Should an Italian priest come to a clear experimental knowledge of the truth, he would soon find that to remain unmolested in the church he must stifle his convictions and hush the voice of conscience. He would not dare to preach the gospel as Paul preached it, and should he attempt to do so to any extent, even in private, a paternal and warning admonition would quickly come from his bishop.

I venture the opinion that there is not a single Roman Catholic church in the whole of Italy where the gospel is preached and where the people may get clear and definite and biblical ideas concerning the way of salvation. This is a serious charge, but let him who can, prove that it is not true. When that church is discovered then one evangelical will certainly go on a pilgrimage, and devoutly thank God and take courage.

Shall we then be indifferent to mission work in Italy on the ground that the people already have the gospel? Just this argument is used by not a few friends both in England and America. But they are deceived; so, at least, every evangelical worker in Italy would say. If such persons are

not privileged to gather information directly by a visit and by residence in Italy, surely they ought to be willing to accept the testimony of Italian Christians and of missionaries long on the field.[1]

Signor Varnier of Messina, in Sicily, an aged evangelical minister, though once a devout Catholic and a zealous priest, in speaking before the great conference of the Evangelical Alliance, held in Florence in 1891, said:

From the time of my conversion (from Romanism) I felt an ardent desire to return to this land of ours (from India, where he had been sent as a missionary) and devote all my poor energies, all my life, to promoting a thorough reformation of the church in Italy. But alas! at that time our dear Italy was split into petty kingdoms, tyrannized over by petty princes in alliance with the papacy. Sicily, my native island, was groaning under the oppression of the Bourbon government and in total spiritual darkness. No native of the land was allowed to profess the religion of the gospel, much less to preach or to teach it to others. The Italian Bible was a proscribed book there (in Sicily) no less than it was here. The only bright spot in all Italy was little Piedmont (where, through centuries of deep spiritual darkness and bitter persecution, God had wondrously preserved the Waldenses).

In this state of things I had but to pray and wait the Lord's time if he would use me in his blessed gospel cause in my native land. This time, however, came. On reaching Italy, with a view of ascertaining what prospects there were of effecting a thorough reformation of the church, I visited some of its principal towns, exploring the views, ideas, tendencies, and dispositions of the clergy and laity to that effect, and their actual state of religious thought and religious aspirations.

The idea of church reformation I had cherished for Italy was that it should be effected from within and not from without; that it should be a corporate reformation brought about by a national impulse of a want deeply felt for a purer, higher, and spiritual church life. . . But alas! I was very sadly disappointed in my expectations, and soon I perceived that such a reformation as I had designed in my mind was impossible. In ascertaining the real state of religious thought, tendencies, and aspirations, both of clergy and people, in the different towns of Italy and Sicily, I found there was a desire indeed for a reformation; but their ideas of church reformation did not rise above simple ecclesiastical reformation.

[1] See Chapters XXIX. and XXX.

It was a reformation of forms, a simplification of ritual; the performance of the church services in the language of the people; the abolition of enforced celibacy and restoration of the right of marriage to the clergy; a limitation of papal and episcopal power over clergy and people; the suppression of gross abuses in the church, and such like externals. But as for a spiritual reformation, a return of the church to the spirit and the purposes of the gospel; to a renovation of mind and heart in its members in accordance with the revealed will of God, feeding on and abiding by his word; to a higher spiritual and inner life hidden with Christ in God, seeking communion with him in faith and acceptance through the blood of Christ—of this reformation, the real, indispensable, and needed spiritual reformation of the church in Italy, neither clergy nor laity seemed to think of it or to have any conception of it.

An army of witnesses might be summoned who could give the same testimony, many of whom, like the speaker whose words have just been cited, were once sincere Roman Catholics, brought up in all the tenets, superstitions, and practices of that faith, and zealous for the traditions of the fathers.

Ponder those suggestive words of Professor Comba, already cited, whose special studies in ecclesiastical history qualify him to speak:

Only those who are obstinately blind to history will believe that Catholic reform is sincere. The ideals of that church are expressed in doctrines of which only blind eyes cannot see the absurdity. Some have entertained the hope that Italy will be saved from the dualism which is destroying it by a reform originating in a Catholic sphere and cleansing its seat, so spreading through the country, bringing the papacy within proper limits. But the hope is not sound. We shall never see the Catholic school rise to the ideals of a new life. It has not the moral and intellectual independence which the time as well as the dignity of man demands. It is owing to Roman Catholicism that Italy is in the state of moral weakness in which it is.

We come now to a third and inevitable conclusion, viz, evangelicals must evangelize Italy; otherwise it will never be done. This is the thought above all others that we wish to impress upon our brethren of other lands, for without their prayerful sympathy and untiring financial support our hercu-

lean task would seem to mock us by its greatness, and the realization of our inspiring hopes would be indefinitely postponed.

In a remarkable address on "Religious Thought in Italy," to which reference has already been made, Doctor Mariano, of the University of Naples, said:

> It will be easy to understand now that evangelicals are the only ones who have rightly understood the religious problem of Italy, and have set themselves to solve it. They are few, but their small nucleus is the column of fire in the wilderness.
>
> No enterprise is more worthy of praise than that of the evangelical missions. Their followers are few, but each one of them is a conscience free from the tyranny and the terror of Romanism and restored to the liberty of the Christian soul.

Only a beginning has been made in this great work. This is still the day of small things in Italy, and the little band of evangelical workers must daily bear reproach for Christ's sake. But who would not willingly bear reproach in order to have a share in the moral and spiritual renovation of such a land? We must not forget what Italy has been. She was once mistress of the world. Her soil has been prolific of great men, soldiers, statesmen, orators, poets, scientists, artists, musicians, and teachers. Many of these have rivaled the foremost of any land and challenged the admiration of the world. During the period of the *Renaissance* she was the prime mover and chief promoter of arts and of learning.

Modern Italy has been called an effete nation, but one has only to read the thrilling story of her recent struggle for liberty and independence to be convinced that this charge cannot be true. Could the same spirit and energy and patience and genius, so conspicuous during the dark days of that political struggle, be regenerated and transformed and as devotedly consecrated to the spiritual regeneration and uplifting of the nation, what a blessed change would speedily greet our longing eyes! This bright vision, which is the end

and object of our every endeavor, sometimes looms up before us in the distance, inspiring our hearts with fresh hope and courage.

If the blood of the martyrs be the seed of the church, then surely there is hope for Italy. Italian soil has been reddened by this blood. The great Apostle Paul counted it an honor to be among the first, and thousands of others in primitive times followed his example. All through the Dark Ages, when truth was crushed to earth and error vaunted itself with blatant pride, when the kingdom of evil was mysteriously and cruelly triumphant, when most men dared not call their souls their own, there were always a few faithful ones in Italy who had not bowed the knee to Baal, who had not the mark of the beast or his image, who prized principle more than life, and fidelity to conscience and to God above worldly comfort and honor. To the all-seeing eye of God there were doubtless more of these faithful ones than the world supposed or than history records, whose names were inscribed only in the Lamb's book of life, heaven's unerring register. A few Italian Elijahs, a few Jeremiahs, a few Daniels, are well known to the world; but when the true history of those dark days is written, it will be found that many thousands in Italy knew how to suffer and die for the truth.

Can we believe that these sufferings were unnoticed or have been forgotten by the righteous and merciful Judge of all the earth? He who heard the cry of his oppressed people in Egypt and so wondrously delivered them, will he not avenge the blood of his people in Italy and, "though he bear long with them," graciously hear their cry and grant their prayer for the spiritual deliverance of their beloved land? There are yet tears to shed, and perhaps even blood, and reproaches to bear, and fatigues to endure, and difficulties to encounter, and sad disappointments to experience, before we see the realization of our heart's desire, before unbelieving Papal Italy shall be regenerated and transformed

into Evangelical Italy. But faith saith : "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." This is indeed a "consummation devoutly to be wished," for were Italy, the home of the pope and the heart of Romanism, thoroughly evangelized and regenerated, who can estimate the influence of such a work on the evangelization of the world? May the "Lord of the harvest" hasten that glorious day !

ADDENDA

I

BELOW will be found the very words of the Decree of the Sacred Congregation to which reference is made on page 237 :

Quum Sacra Congregatio Indulgentiis Sacrisque Reliquiis præposita opusculum italico idiomate exaratum, cui titulus "Il tesoro delle Sacre Indulgenze Esposto alle anime pie" *auctore Canonico Almerico Guerra uni ex Consultoribus examinandum dederit, idemque testatus fuerit Dicreta* authentica *quoad Indulgentias ab hac eadem Sacra Congregatione huc usque edita in eo fideliter relata reperiri, typis imprimi ac publicari posse permisit.*

Ex Secretaria eiusdem S. Congregationis die 20 Julii 1883.

AL. CARD. OREGLIA a S. STEPHANO,
Præfectus.

L. ┼ S.

FRANCISCUS DELLA VOLPE,
Secretarius.

II

A PRAYER TO MARY.

O most pure and ever Immaculate Virgin Mary, Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Eternal Son, Bride of the Holy Spirit, August and living Temple of the Holy Trinity, Lily of Purity, Mirror without spot, Queen of Heaven and Earth, Virgin most powerful, Tower of David, Mother of Mercy, Refuge of Sinners, Health of the Infirm, Comforter of the Afflicted, at your feet we miserable sinners humbly prostrate ourselves. Deliver us from sin and preserve us from every evil.

Just above this prayer were inscribed these words : "Every time this prayer of eulogy is repeated, one hundred days of indulgence are earned, the same having been granted by the

High Priest Gregory XV., Clement XII., Pius VI. Praised and ever Blessed be the Holy and immaculate conception of Mary." In the same church is a prayer to Saint Anna, mother of Mary, in which she is asked to intercede with her "Grandson Jesus." On the door of the same church I read the following notice: "The first mass will be celebrated at 7 o'clock before the most holy Image of the Blessed Virgin, Patron Saint of the Florentine people. During the Holy Mass the Most Holy Image of the Blessed Virgin will be uncovered."

The original of this prayer to Mary is as follows:

O Purissima ed Immacolata sempre Vergine Maria, Figlia dell' Eterno Padre, Madre dell' Eterno Figlio, sposa dello Spirito Santo, Augusto e vivo Tempio della Triade Sacrosanta, Giglio di Purità, Specchio senza macchia, Regina del Cielo e della Terra, Vergine potentissima—Torre di Davide, Madre di misericordia, Rifuggio dei Peccatori, Salute degli infermi, Consolatrice degli afflitti, ai vostri piedi noi miserabili peccatori ci prostriamo umilmente. Liberateci dal peccato, e preservateci da ogni male.

The following is the promise prefixed to the prayer as a reward for repeating it:

Ogni volta che si dice la sequente orazione de elogio si guadagna *l' indulgenza di 100 giorni, conceduta dai Sommi Pontefici Greg. XV., Clem. XII., Pio VI. Lodata e Benedetta sempre sia la Santa ed immacolata concezione di Maria.*

III

Translation of the correspondence referred to by Signor Borgia on page 264:

BACK IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

The Persecution of Don Silva Because he Became a Protestant.

(From our Correspondent.)

SEREGNO, June 27, 1892.

It is a well-known fact in this town that five years ago Signor Giuseppe Silva, formerly Father Federico of Seregno, feeling that he had mistaken

his calling, rather than remain a hypocritical Capuchin monk resolved to throw aside his cowl and embrace principles which are more in consonance with the voice of his conscience. However, from that day it seems that his fellow-townsmen had sworn *vendetta* upon him. Years afterward, on his way from London, whither he had gone in the interests of his office, he found himself in Milan. After an absence of five years he was seized with a strong desire to visit again his native town and to shake hands with his relatives and many friends. By special request a friend in Milan agreed to come with him to this place.

Day before yesterday the two friends left on the tram of Porta Volta about 3.30 P. M. It is well to take note of the fact that, besides several gentlemen in the same compartment, there was also a priest who left the tram at Desio. By the time the two reached Seregno the news that Don Silva was coming had already spread throughout the whole town. A broad-shouldered grenadier of a priest, about thirty years of age, followed the two strangers from the moment they left the tram. On reaching Colombo they went in to take a glass of beer. A man, dressed in white, entered the *café*, took his seat by the side of Don Silva in order to scrutinize him more closely, drank his beer in great haste and went out immediately. Soon after Signor Silva and his friend left also. The entire population of the town seemed to come forth from their houses, their shops, and their offices into the streets. A woman and a girl who had before been seen in the *café*, ran off in great haste to carry the news to those who had not yet heard it. The man in white clothes, before mentioned, was standing in the square in close converse with an aged priest. From every side was heard, "The renegade, the Judas, the traitor is in Seregno!" and a welcome anything else than pleasant was awaiting them.

Signor Silva, however, paid no attention to the ugly frowns and the insolent words which he heard, but took his friend to see the beautiful church where he had often preached when he was a monk. On leaving the church and before going to salute his friends, Signor Silva wished to visit the cemetery and take one look at the grave of his beloved father. Returning from the cemetery, a crowd of boys, women, peasants, and workmen awaited them at the entrance to the town. Signor Silva and his friend, thinking it prudent not to enter by that street, followed a country road which led to the other extremity of the town. But, behold, from the courts and the yards people poured forth with threatening aspect, some even carrying sticks and clubs. But what can these people want?

Signor Silva called to mind certain threatening letters, and the advice of his friends that he ought not to put foot in Seregno, where they had

sworn to beat him in pieces or make him share the fate of Giordano Bruno or of Savonarola. In confirmation of this threat the boys, the young men, and some women who had followed the two strangers, began to cry out: "Oh, we will beat them to pieces!" "Yes, yes," said others, "we are determined to kill this freemason!" and others still, "Oh, he'll never leave Seregno again!" etc. Cries and hisses and the most opprobrious insults were heard; the people were only waiting for some pretext to fall upon the ex-capuchin like so many ferocious beasts. And it is certain that if he had been alone they would have fallen upon him without so many compliments. If they did not, it was because he was accompanied by his friend, who, with his stern expression, was supposed to be a policeman or some person of considerable authority in Milan.

Finally the two unlucky visitors reached the other end of the town; but behold, they were face to face with a new crowd which awaited them. Passing out of the town, they took the road which leads to Giussano. A rabble, mostly boys, followed them, hissing and yelling out: "Freemason! Judas! Traitor!" and accompanied by such music they continued their journey for nearly a mile. At a certain point some peasant cried out, "Death to the traitor!" and then a tempest of stones began to fall. Signor Silva's friend remained a little behind in order to intimidate the crowd, and he obtained a moment's truce.

A cart-driver passing at that moment, they said to him, "What are all these people doing, and what is the meaning of this noise and these threats?" "Why, they say," responded the cart-driver, "that two freemasons have been in the church and that the church trembled and was shaken as by an earthquake. The whole town is upside down, and is waiting for the return of the two freemasons." At that very moment other peasants appeared and stirred up the rabble again, and down came another tempest of stones. The danger was now becoming grave. As fortune would have it, however, the tram which runs between Seregno and Giussano was passing, and the two persecuted ones signaled to the conductor, the tram stopped, they entered and went to Giussano and from there to Milan.

IV

A SYMPOSIUM OF OPINIONS.

From Rev. N. H. Shaw, English Baptist Missionary, who has labored fifteen years in Italy, most of this time being spent in Rome:

My Dear Mr. Eager: I have read your book with real pleasure. It is full of interesting facts, and will, I believe, be very popular. I venture to predict for it a very extensive sale, and hope it will be as widely read as, without doubt, it deserves to be.

If I could have read such a description of Romanism twenty years ago, I should have been tempted to regard many of the statements made and facts cited as evidence of Protestant prejudice, or at least uncharitable exaggeration. But after living in Italy nearly fifteen years, I find the reverse of exaggeration in your book. Very much, alas! remains to be told. The book will be hated by the enemies of truth and righteousness,—you will not mind that,—but it ought to be very useful to a very large class of intelligent and excellent persons who, having seen Romanism only in Protestant countries, where it is more or less Protestantized in its manifestations, are lamentably ignorant of what it really is, and think to exercise a superior charity in caressing it and indulging hopes respecting it which a fuller acquaintance would show to be not only vain but absurd.

I was much interested in your account of the preaching in the Church of Gesù, in Rome.[1] How well you remember it! And yet this incident may serve as a sample of much in your book which might have been considerably amplified had you not exercised that wholesome restraint which renders testimony the more reliable. You will remember that at the end of his tirade, the preacher called upon the hearers to stand up in attestation of their sympathy with his sentiments and hatred of our doings; and all stood up except you and the writer of this, who was about ten yards from you. There may have been one or two others in like case to ours, but I did not see them, and the position,—a minority of two among thousands in such circumstances,—however satisfactory to our consciences, was anything but pleasing or desirable.

The aim of your book is a high and holy one. It is necessary to tell the truth, and you have told it in love, and your intelligent readers will know that you and we other missionaries are occupied principally, not in directly fighting the papacy, but in preaching the gospel and trying to save men from the awful wreck of faith for which Romanism is responsible.

Yours affectionately,

Nathl. H. Shaw.

Florence, Piazza Cavour 1, October 3, 1893.

From George B. Taylor, D. D., of Rome, who for twenty years has been superintendent of American Baptist Mission

[1] See pp. 100–103.

Work in Italy, and author of "Italy and the Italians," published 1898 by the American Baptist Publication Society:

My Dear Doctor Eager: Permit me to congratulate you on the successful completion of your *magnum opus*. The idea of it was most happy, and fortunately was born when Italy was still comparatively new to you and your mind susceptible to every impression. With admirable patience and skill you have for years garnered facts and evidence, leaving others to reason and philosophize upon them. Thus have you made a really valuable contribution to that controversy which, antedating the Reformation, cannot cease while Romanism shall endure. Specially timely must your book prove in England and America where popery—*semper eadem*—no less impudent in its claims, is yet far more cautious in its methods, and, like Satan himself, "is transformed into an angel of light." That you have not "set down aught in malice," but have been obliged rather to "extenuate" and keep back some things too bad to be told, will be confirmed by all who know you and your theme. At the same time I cannot help asking myself whether your picture would not have been both truer to life and also more artistic had the darkness been relieved by some gleams of light. This modest criticism would have been withheld but for my own loyalty to the principle indicated, which, however, in my case works in the reverse direction. Your style is simple and unambitious, content, without intruding itself, to be a mere medium for the thought. The book deserves, and I confidently predict for it, a large sale, while it will also reflect honor upon you and the Mission, and, best of all, be useful.

Yours sincerely,

George B. Taylor.

Rome, October 21, 1893.

From Rev. S. V. Ravi, Italian Methodist pastor in Florence:

My Dear Mr. Eager: I have read with the greatest pleasure and interest your manuscript on priestcraft in Italy, and I have found it a very important work indeed.

I hope you will publish it as soon as possible, for a work such as that is calculated to do a world of good, especially in England and the United States of America, where the majority of Protestants know very little about popery, and many of them are deceived and led into error by the Jesuits. The subject of your book is well conceived and well divided, and the manner of treating it could not be better for a popular

book. I do not think that any one can accuse you of exaggeration, as, after all, you state only facts which everybody can ascertain ; and as for accusing you of want of charity, that would be absurd, as all your opinions and suggestions are very mild and charitable indeed.

Besides all these good qualities, I think that your book is also very opportune. Roman Catholicism, as I saw with my own eyes during my last visit to those countries, is making great progress in England and the United States. Spread your book as widely as you can, and do whatever is in your power to stop this great evil.

Wishing you great success, I am, my dear brother,

Yours faithfully,

S. V. Ravi.

Florence, Italy, November 21, 1893.

From Rev. James Wall, English Baptist Missionary in Rome, who has labored in Italy more than twenty years :

My Dear Mr. Eager : I was not able, through the shortness of time allowed me, to read your very interesting manuscript quite through. I did, however, read the greater part of it with great pleasure and much profit.

I think it is calculated to be exceedingly useful to a very numerous class of readers both in England and America. I believe you will have no difficulty in getting it published.

I am, my dear brother,

Yours very truly,

James Wall.

Rome, October 24, 1893.

From Rev. William Burt, superintendent of American Methodist Mission Work in Italy :

Methodist Episcopal Church,

Via Venti Settembre N. 27.

Roma, November 25, 1893.

Dear Mr. Eager : I have read the manuscript of your book with considerable care and with great interest. I am sure it is needed, and I believe that it will be widely read and will do much good. The facts are stated, and examples and illustrations cited, without any exaggeration whatever, hence the book is a trustworthy source of information on the topics treated. Under the different subjects forming the titles of chapters one gets a fair picture of the real state of things. There is a timely

note of warning of the danger of Romanism in England and America. Romanism, by adapting itself to its environments, has a wonderful power to deceive and enslave men. Your first impressions might have been written *our* first impressions, since they almost exactly correspond to what we all experience in coming to live and work in this country. Certain it is "the half has never been told." To know Romanism one should know it at its fountain-head, and here it is nothing more nor less than "baptized paganism." The chapter on relics is extremely interesting because so replete with facts of what you yourself have seen, and to most of them we could personally add our testimony. How few know the horrid cruelties yet practised under the name of penance. You have given us well authenticated facts. The examples of intolerance and persecution might be multiplied a hundred-fold. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

What a blessing this book would be if our friends would but understand from it the true relation of the Romish Church to the people and to the political weal. No wonder that the people here have such horrid ideas of Protestants before they know them, because of what they hear about them from the papal pulpits. From the chapter on priests the reader will gain a very correct idea of their sad condition; most of them are really to be pitied rather than blamed or accused. Every one who lives in Italy must confess the absolute divorce between morality and religion. The very worst things are done with an apparently good conscience.

Few Americans know anything about the diabolical institutions and practices sanctioned and maintained by the Romish Church. The Christ of the gospel is unknown and the house of God is become the temple of idolatry and superstition. After reading these pages, who can deny the worship of images in the Romish Church?

It is well said that in the "Santa Bottega" they "seek not you but yours"; any spiritual gift or privilege can be had for money. Many have asked me how the Romish Church gets so much money in these days. Let such read Chapter XXIII. The facts set forth in your book must certainly convince all that the Romish Church does forbid the people to read the Bible. All our ministers and workers could give similar opinions and testimonies to those you have cited.

I sincerely hope that the book may be read by thousands, and that the eyes of our Christian friends may be opened and their hearts inspired to help us in our difficult but very important work.

With most cordial greetings, I am

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM BURT.

From Rev. L. M. Galassi, Italian pastor in Florence:

PISTOIA, September 29, 1893.

ESTEEMED MR. EAGER: You have done me a real favor in giving me the opportunity to read your valuable work on Romanism. It is truly a pleasure to find a foreigner so well informed about the religious practices of our people, and the grievous results which the papacy has produced and produces among us.

I am sure that if all the foreigners who come to Italy were to occupy themselves seriously about the most important question, which is certainly the religious question, they would not be so charmed by the æsthetic beauties of Catholic temples, nor so fascinated by the pompous display of papal ceremonies, and they would return home nauseated witnesses of an ecclesiastical system so fatal in its consequences.

Unfortunately I was born in the lap of Romanism, and had reached the age of seventeen without knowing the true reason why Jesus died. But happily about that time God intervened and revealed Christ to me through his word. During the eighteen years which have passed since then I have been comparing the truth of the gospel with the absurdities of Rome, so that to-day I have a large number of facts which harmonize perfectly with what you have scrupulously collected and included in your book. Yes, nearly every point you make I could confirm, not only with theories and historical statements from the past, but with facts which have happened to me or under my eyes, and which are being repeated constantly. Your book is a proof that you have entered truly into the heart of the question; it is a genuine anatomy of the religious condition of our country.

I pray that God may bless this work which, with no little labor, you have brought to an end, and that soon it may see the light in your own country, and that it may help to increase the Christian love and interest of our brethren of the New World toward the old land of the popes.

I salute you in Christ, and remain,

Yours affectionately,

L. M. GALASSI.

From Rev. John R. McDougall, thirty years pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Florence, Secretary and Treasurer of the Italian Evangelical Church, and prominently connected with mission work in Italy:

MY DEAR MR. EAGER: Thanks very many for permitting me a hasty glance, in this busy life of mine, at your most interesting manuscript,

which I trust will soon be published, for in my belief it has a popular career before it, and is destined to be exceedingly useful.

I certainly think you are far too apologetic in your preface. Everybody is in quest of facts nowadays to guide them in the formation of their opinions, and as you only cite things which you have yourself seen and heard, and which can be easily corroborated by numbers of other residents in Italy, I rather deprecate so much apology, as unfitting the reader for the perusal of your frank and honest pages, though I know it comes from your own goodness of heart.

Now that Roman Catholicism has been deprived, and forever, of the temporal power by which it would coerce the nations to its faith, and stands alone on the ignorance and superstitions of its votaries, it seems to me a duty to explain what its system is in the land where its sway is universal, and where, with every advantage in its favor, it has sunk the people to the degraded, priest-ridden condition which you prove by facts, stern, undeniable facts, however incredible these things may seem at first to be to our British and American peoples. Let it be an object lesson to some of our kith and kin who hanker after mummeries and church millinery and an unscriptural priesthood, warning them and all of us of the abyss which lies before us as honored Christian nations of the West, however high our present position and great our present privileges, should we forget the gospel of God's grace, which has secured for us all our civil and religious liberties, and is the basis of all that truth and honor and righteousness which exalt men and nations.

With my kindest regards,

Ever yours most sincerely,

JOHN R. McDOUGALL.

FLORENCE, SCOTCH CHURCH, November 17, 1893.

From Rev. W. Kemme Landels, English missionary in Turin:

110 CORSO V. EMANUELE, TORINO, N. ITALY,
13 December, 1893.

REV. J. H. EAGER, D. D., FIRENZE. MY DEAR FRIEND: I have read your book with great interest and keen enjoyment and thank you for having written it. I should judge that your easy, pleasant manner of treating the subject, together with the simple, chatty style you have adopted, will assure a large sale and widespread popularity.

Once in conversation with me you said that you feared some people might think your book exaggerated. My experience of Catholicism in Italy extends to within a few months of twenty years; of these, ten were passed in Naples and six in Turin. During the whole of that time I

have been in the closest possible touch with the people. My experience ought, therefore, to be of some weight, and I have no hesitation in saying that your book, far from exaggerating the evils of Catholicism in this country, might well have made them appear still more iniquitous.

My first experience of Italian life was in the spring and summer of 1874. For five months my lot was cast in a small town in the Province of Girgenti (Sicily). The window of my room looked across a little courtyard right into that of a priest, brother of the landlord, the distance between the windows being about ten feet. This priest was a man of about forty, highly sanctimonious in his appearance, and held in high esteem by the people, who, as he passed along the street, crowded forward to kiss his hand. During my sojourn of five months in that house the priest to my certain knowledge had three women living with him! The opinion I then formed of the priesthood, opinion which in part led to my becoming a missionary to this people, is, after the experience of twenty years, fully confirmed, with the only difference, that to-day I blame the priest less and pity him more than I did then, my deliberate judgment being that a man who *is a man* cannot do his duty as a priest and remain a moral man. The system is to be blamed on every count, the priest is to be blamed and pitied at the same time. Far be it from me to say, however, that there are no good men in the priesthood. I have known many excellent men, but as priests they were altogether found wanting.

Our Catholic friends in America and England would be astonished were they to know to what an extent those who are living under a vow of celibacy are responsible for the increase of population. One of the members of our little church here is the daughter of an ecclesiastic of high standing; one of the children of our Sunday-school is the son of the principal priest in a parish not a hundred miles from Turin.

That your book may be the means of opening the eyes of the people to these and similar iniquities is the prayer and expectation of

Yours very truly and affectionately,

W. Kemme Landels.

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